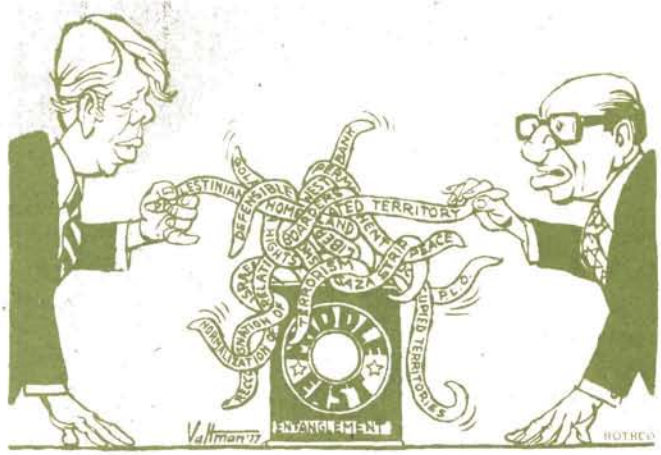
THE RIGHT *NOT* TO SPEAK **CAREY McWILLIAMS**

THE NATION

JULY 23-30, 1977 *60 cents*

'OUR S.O.B.s'
THE SOMOZAS OF NICARAGUA
Penny Lernoux

NEW LOOK AT ISRAEL
DAVID CAPLOE



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LETTERS

Hentoff as witness

Thought you might enjoy knowing how far-reaching is Nat Hentoff's superb series, *Indigenous Music*! It has been used in exhibits to the FCC, documenting the importance of the era of the pre-1950s jazz and popular music, which is on the air eighteen hours a day out here in the Bay Area. . . .

But the public is in immediate danger of losing this unique format (KMPX, 107-FM), due to the N.Y. owners' desires (backed by CBS) to sell out to a religious station. Because the airwaves belong to the public, listeners have filed a "Petition to Deny" with the FCC, keeping the station on the air an additional eight months to date. The FCC should grant or deny a hearing soon. If denied, we'll go to the Appeals court which has ruled in favor of the listeners over broadcasters in several other cities. . . .

We would like to hear from people involved in such citizens-rights-in-broadcasting fights.

David Monthie, KMPX Listeners Guild, 1729 Arch St. No. 4, Berkeley, Calif. 94709

'successful math'

Oberlin, Ohio

According to John Liston [letters column, June 18] Morris Kline "proved" the failure of New Math six different ways. I have not had a chance to read Mr. Kline's book, so I cannot make any specific responses. From my experience, though, the New Math has been an overwhelming success. For the last ten years of my public school education, I learned the New Math. My high school consistently performed well in interscholastic mathematics competitions. I am now enrolled at one of the country's better colleges, with students generally above average in educational background. However, I am continually shocked by their mathematical ignorance. Sure, they can add a column of digits, but they appear never to have been taught many of those things Mr. Liston calls "obvious." Once learned, they are obvious, but only then. I have come across several people envious of the additional insight which the New Math has provided to those fortunate to be exposed to it. This insight is not only useful in the solution to abstruse mathematical problems but also in solving problems in everyday life.

I don't like writing letters like this—I have benefited so much from the New Math I can't really see why it needs any defense. Perhaps it is the general skepticism with which many of the innovations of the 1960s are now being looked at. This is hinted at by Mr. Liston when he refers to a "counterrevolution." It's true that the 1960s brought many problems, but New Math is not numbered among them.

Alan Frank

correction

Merrick, N.Y.

In the first paragraph of your editorial, "The CIA's Apprentices" [*The Nation*, June 25], you refer to ". . . the enormous roost called the Defense Intelligence Agency whose spies in the skies and on the ground and under the seas are said to be able to listen to every word spoken on this planet."

If you cannot correctly identify the intelligence agency allegedly able "to listen to every word spoken on this planet" how much credibility can be attached to your succeeding allegations?

Louis Kruh

Mr. Kruh is right. It is the National Security Agency (NSA) that is the talented electronic snooper, not the DIA.

The editors welcome letters from readers but regret that space limitations often prevent publication of those of more than 250 words.

EDITORIALS

After the B-1

It requires great faith in President Carter's firmly declared purposes about arms reduction to give an optimistic reading to his cancellation of the B-1 bomber program. The action was good in itself, of course, but the "time frame" in which it was taken included the apparent decision to proceed at full speed with the much more menacing cruise missile, along with the accidental revelation that we are far advanced toward production of the immensely lethal neutron bomb.

Quite naturally, the Russians view as ominous the rapid pace of our development of these new weapons even as we abandon an old one. But they are not alone in their uneasiness. There was such a cascade of clever publicity about the B-1 decision (with the President giving contradictory hints of his intentions to those he consulted, both pro and con), that the actual announcement of the demise of the B-1 took on the character of a statesmanlike switch. The termination of this monstrously expensive project, which surprised when it did not shock the experts, seemed for a moment like a long step toward slowing down the arms race with the Soviet Union. All it really did, in our opinion, was to bury a dinosaur which would immediately be replaced by two much more adaptable species.

About the B-1, all that needs saying is that this $100-million-per-copy plane has only a marginal value in increased offensive capability over the B-52 it would replace. It was a hugely expensive gadget which the Air Force and one of its suppliers, Rockwell International, had been developing for years. The famous "triad" of weapons systems—bombers, missiles on land, missiles from submarines—remains intact without it. Deterrence is in place and all is well. Or is it?

The brutal fact is that the abandonment of the B-1 signals the advent of the "tetrad"—four distinct systems of nuclear bombardment. Added to the present three will be a new one, the relatively cheap cruise missile which can be launched in a variety of ways and whose guidance system gives it devastating accuracy. Lurking behind this weapon is a new generation of "silo-busting" strategic missiles, well along in the process of gestation, things with names like M-X, lethal objects on the move in 10-mile trenches to increase their invulnerability. And on the tactical, as against the strategic, front there are those neutron bombs that an artillery piece can fire and which are sometimes called "humane" because, though they kill soldiers with intense radiation, they tend to spare bystanders and buildings outside the immediate area.

Is it any wonder then that the Russians should be looking beyond the fact of the B-1 cancellation into the futuristic array of "new types of weapons for mass annihilation," as one of their commentators put it? "It is pointed out by sober-minded analysts," declared Yuri Kornilov, with flat understatement, in a text distributed by Tass, "that the development of these new weapons creates additional difficulties for further Soviet-American strategic arms limitation talks." It is hard not to agree with that assessment.

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If Americans have trouble assenting to such a statement when it comes from the adversary against whom all these arsenals are ranged, they might consider the reaction of a compatriot, the former Secretary of the Air Force, John L. McLucas. In a letter to *The New York Times* (July 10), McLucas writes of Carter's apparent course in the following sober words: "The President is moving away from a world of known weapons systems where all major weapons can be counted and tracked for a world of imponderables about weapons. He could not have found a way to add more to the arms race than he has done by this decision." Evidently, the former Secretary of the Air Force favored the B-1 bomber, a known and accountable weapon, whatever its cost, to the unknown qualities and quantities of the cruise missile. "If we thought the triad was a valid concept," he asks, "why must we go to the tetrad, with all the problems a whole new weapons system entails?"

Why indeed? Perhaps President Carter has the answer. If he does, he has not shared it with the American people. What he has said to us, and to the world in his speech to the United Nations, seems to run quite contrary to the real effect of his actions on arms development. He declared at the U.N. just a few weeks ago that "the arms race is now imbedded in the fabric of international affairs and can only be contained with the greatest of difficulty." He pointed to the fact that the United States and the USSR "have almost five times as many missile warheads today as we had five years ago. Yet we are not five times more secure! On the contrary, the arms race has only increased the risk of conflict." Unexceptionable words, unmatched by actions.

We are told that Carter seeks a meeting with Brezhnev of an informal, get-acquainted sort and that the Russian leader resists. One must wonder how, at that meeting, the President would propose to square his words with his actions and thus advance the cause of arms reduction. Carter surely knows that when Gerald Ford met with Brezhnev at Vladivostok in November 1974 the Russian leader was far more concerned about cruise missiles than with any other weapons system in being or under development. How would Brezhnev construe Carter's rejection of the B-1 at his June 29th press conference ("a very expensive weapons system basically conceived in the absence of the cruise missile factor") as anything but a signal that we mean to go all-out with a weapons technology in which we have a long lead over the Russians? Are we not abandoning the concept of mutual deterrence and inching toward the "destabilizing" first-strike capability?

Optimists will perhaps take some comfort from the notion of the "bargaining chip"—we develop new weapons like the cruise missile and the neutron bomb only in order to have something to give up if the Russians will make equivalent concessions. But these chips seem to

Notice to Our Readers

The Nation is publishing on its fortnightly summer schedule. The next issue will be dated August 6-13.

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grow in magnitude and number the longer they are shoved back and forth across the negotiating table. They serve only as funny money. Russian laboratories are said to be busy matching our chips—high-energy beams to destroy incoming nuclear missiles with subatomic particles, laser beams to knock out reconnaissance satellites. The deadly game continues on both sides.

If one assumes, as we do, that the United States is in a position to take disarmament initiatives without risking anything in the strategic contest with the Soviet Union, then it is about time for the President to start doing so. If he ever gets President Brezhnev to sit down with him to talk and not just to ratify, he will find his charm about as useless as John F. Kennedy discovered his famous brand to be against Khrushchev at Vienna in 1961. He would have to persuade the Russian that this country had force capabilities which it was seriously interested in not developing if the Soviet Union would follow the same course with its own technological specialties.

If that worked, the real struggle would begin for Carter and for Brezhnev. They would have to go to work to get the assent of their military-industrial bureaucracies to the diminishment of the arms race. For Carter the effort should be easier. At least he would have his pious, and occasionally noble, words to fall back on. And he could go over the heads of the selfishly interested parties. He could appeal to the people of this country, who have always been ahead of their political leaders in support of steps toward lasting peace.

Trademark

It is hard to know what to call the President. He is, of course, that—the Chief Executive. Either of those functional titles will do, quite properly.

But then he also has a name, like everybody else. His family name is Carter and his parents added his father's names, James and Earl. So, before he entered politics, he was styled and known as James Earl Carter Jr.

Somewhere along the road running to the White House he decided that was too remote, not friendly enough, and he asked people to call him "Jimmy." He signed documents "Jimmy Carter," and he still does. With that familiar moniker he took the oath of office as this country's thirty-ninth President.

We, among others, have had some difficulty in using that name. It seemed like a brand name—like Georgia's own "Coke" for Coca-Cola—a kind of registered trademark. "Jimmy" is supposed to be more endearing than "James Earl Jr.," suggesting modesty and other republican virtues; a dictator or "imperial President" would hardly be called "Jimmy."

At last there came a solution to this problem of styling and taste. Recently it was revealed that it was as "James E. and Rosalynn Carter" that the couple filed their income tax return. Before the IRS, that ultimate humbler of us all, Carter found no way to pose. He had to give his legal name on his form 1040. "Jimmy Carter" was not the taxpayer from Plains; it was "James Earl Carter" (the "Jr." seems to have been lost somewhere).

If President Carter calls himself by his given, as against adopted, name to the IRS, then why should we use a brand name? From now we shall use the name known to that final authority in a nation of taxpayers. It will be "James Earl Carter" and it sounds all right.

The Cruelty of 'Morality'

President Carter spoke in chilling moralistic tones about the right to abortion for women rich and poor at his July 12th press conference. In effect he washed his powerful hands of the state's responsibility to deal even-handedly with this profoundly important constitutional and human right. That leaves abortion as a right for the rich and out of reach for the poor.

The *New York Times* story reporting his words accurately summarized their burden when it said that "he seemed to suggest that he believed there were inherent limitations on the government's obligation to right economic injustice." That is the point. Carter has come out for a social and economic injustice, basing his case for that cruel position on "moral" factors. He apparently had in mind John F. Kennedy's statement that "life is unfair." But that was said in a different context. Kennedy was musing on life as a lottery in which some won and some lost, and he took off from the calling up of military reserve units, thus killing some and not others.

There is nothing the state can do to prevent that kind of unfairness, but there are no such limitations on the matter of making public funds available for abortion in the same way that they are provided for childbirth—and for the adoption of unwanted children. It is worth quoting Carter's harsh words on the equities: "As you know," he said, "there are many things in life that are not fair, that wealthy people can afford and poor people can't. But I don't believe that the federal government should take action to try to make these opportunities exactly equal, particularly when there is a moral factor involved."

Carter's "moral factor" is puzzling. Perhaps he was thinking of religious objections to abortion. Or he may have had inhibiting "political" pressures in mind, from the fanatics of the "right to life" movement. Whatever motivated him in his judgment on this vital question, the ACLU's Aryeh Neier is correct in saying that the effect of the federal government's actions and policies on abortion will be to "jeopardize the life and health of millions of poor women."

Nicaragua's Nightmare Goes On

Almost fifty years ago—in January of 1928—Carleton Beals traveled to Nicaragua on assignment from *The Nation*. His goal was to find and interview Augusto Sandino, who has since become known as one of Latin America's greatest fighters for freedom. At that time, however, Sandino was called a "bandit" and an "outlaw" by the State Department and the complaisant U.S. press.

The State Department was supporting, and Sandino was resisting, the occupation of his country by the United States Marines and the rapacious exploitation of its people by Nicaraguan politicians and generals who served the *gringos*. Beals, the first foreign correspondent ever

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to interview Sandino, wrote a series of dispatches that made headlines around the world, documenting both Sandino's politics and the appalling situation that gave rise to his struggle.

In this issue we publish an article by Penny Lernoux demonstrating, in impressive detail, that nothing has changed in Nicaragua—neither the parasitic ruling class nor imperialistic American policy. The astonishing Somoza family—so vicious as to make even the mythical dictators in Gabriel García Márquez's novels pale by comparison—have used their four decades of rule to turn Nicaragua into a preserve for personal enrichment.

As always, they govern by terror, most of it perpetrated by the American-trained National Guard. And the State Department lies about the harsh reality just as callously as it did fifty years ago, refusing to hear, see or speak of any evil in Nicaragua, and bolstering the Somozas with all kinds of aid. Congress goes along, having recently refused—after a disgraceful lobbying blitz by Somoza's friends at court—to cut off aid to Nicaragua in the light of its egregious human rights violations.

Is it any wonder, then, that President Carter's trumpeted concern for human rights looks to much of the world like a purely anti-Communist crusade in our own strategic interest? American policy toward Latin America, while it has paraded under different public relations tags, (Good Neighbor, Alliance for Progress, etc.) has remained fundamentally the same since the days of Teddy Roosevelt. Its aim is the preservation of conditions favorable to exploitative American business. Its methods are unscrupulous and its allies are as unsavory as possible.

Today, with only three democracies left in South America, a few more sprinkled through Central America and the Caribbean, and our government backing such men as Chile's Pinochet, Argentina's Videla and Nicaragua's Somoza, the situation is worse than ever. Having encouraged these tyrannies to set up shop in our own back yard, the United States must not expect to be taken with complete seriousness when it demands respect for human rights all over the world.

THE RIGHT *NOT* TO SPEAK

CAREY McWILLIAMS

Did the Supreme Court, one wonders, fully realize the important implications of its decision in *Wooley* v. *Maynard*, handed down in mid-April, or had it forgotten some of its earlier actions and decisions? However these questions are answered, it was a major decision and deserves more attention than it has received.

New Hampshire statutes require that noncommercial vehicles bear license plates embossed with the state motto: "Live Free or Die." Maynard and his wife, members of the litigious Jehovah's Witnesses sect, regarded the motto as repugnant to their beliefs and, accordingly, covered it on their license plates. For this offense Maynard served two jail sentences. Then, charged with a third violation, he brought suit in the federal district court, seeking an injunction against further enforcement and declaratory relief. Justices Brennan, Stewart, Marshall, Powell and Stevens joined Chief Justice Burger, who wrote the majority opinion, in affirming the decision of a three-judge court (incidentally, three very good judges—Coffin, Gigneaux and Bownes) which had enjoined the state from arresting and prosecuting the Maynards at any time in the future for covering the motto on their license plates. Dissenting opinions were filed by Justices White, Rehnquist and Blackmun.

State authorities offered two rather flimsy justifications for the requirement that the motto be displayed: it facilitated identification of passenger vehicles, and it promoted state pride and an appreciation of state history. The majority found these interests insufficient to justify the requirement. The New Hampshire statutes, the Chief Justice pointed out, commanded the Maynards to use their private property as a "mobile billboard" for the state's ideological message or suffer a penalty for their refusal. That most people would agree with the thrust of the motto was irrelevant. The state cannot force an individual, as part of his daily life—indeed constantly while driving his automobile in public view—to be an instrument for advocating public adherence to an ideological assertion he finds unacceptable. Such a requirement invades the sphere of intellect and spirit which it is the purpose of the First Amendment to reserve from state control. Justice Rehnquist, in the key dissent, found that the statutes did not require Maynard to "say" anything, nor did they require him to communicate ideas by nonverbal actions that were the equivalent of "speech"; hence the First Amendment did not apply.

The majority opinion is important because of the way it interprets the scope of the protection offered by the First Amendment. That protection, as Chief Justice Burger noted, includes "the right to speak freely and the right to refrain from speaking at all"—that is, in a context in which freedom of mind, intellect and belief are involved. "A system which secures the right to proselytize religious, political, and ideological causes must also guarantee the concomitant right to decline to foster such concepts. The right to speak and the right to refrain from speaking are complementary components of the broader concept of 'individual freedom of mind.'"

That, of course, was precisely the contention of the Hollywood Ten who asserted the right, under the First Amendment, to answer or not to answer as they saw fit questions about their political beliefs and affiliations. The Ten could have claimed the protection of the Fifth Amendment and thereby avoided citations for contempt. But the only way they could offer a direct challenge to the mandate of the House Committee on Un-American Activities was to invoke the protection of the First Amendment. In effect, the Ten contended that their right to refrain from speaking, in the context of the hearings, was safeguarded as fully as their right to speak. Now, nearly three decades later, a majority of the Court has affirmed their contention. If it were not for the fact that the

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Court's rules require that applications for rehearings must be filed within twenty-five days of the decision, the Ten—or their survivors—could apply for a rehearing based on the *Maynard* decision and we would then get a chance to test the consistency of the majority.

In June 1950, the Supreme Court in a 5-to-4 ruling refused to review the contempt convictions of the Hollywood Ten. While the appeal was pending, Alexander Meiklejohn and I submitted an *amicus curiae* brief in which we argued that the First Amendment's protection was basic to the discharge of a citizen's obligations in a democracy; that the electorate had certain rights and that among them was the right to be free of intimidation by legislative committees. As Meiklejohn later pointed out (*The Nation*, December 12, 1953), "A legislative committee which asks the question, 'Are you a Republican?' or 'Are you a Communist?,' accompanying that question with the threat of harm or disrepute if the answer is this rather than that, stands in contempt of the sovereign people to whom it owes submission. . . . The intent of the Constitution is that, politically, we shall be governed by no one but ourselves." Actually the scope of the decision in the *Maynard* ruling is somewhat broader than Meiklejohn's argument: under it a citizen need not be faced with threat of harm or disrepute when he chooses to remain silent; it is his option to speak or to remain silent if the questioning relates to "individual freedom of mind," i.e., if it has to do with matters of thought, belief and intellectual conviction.

Meiklejohn conceded that the Constitution is what the Supreme Court says it is, but pointed out that the Court can change its mind; it has apparently now done so in the *Maynard* case. The Court was very much of a divided mind when it refused to review the case of the Hollywood Ten; the decision might have gone the other way but for the deaths of Justices Murphy and Rutledge and their replacement by Truman appointees. But now, decades later, in a case involving, of all things, auto license plates, and with freedom's banner being borne aloft by two stubborn members of a notably stubborn sect, a great constitutional principle has been reaffirmed.

The experience suggests that New Hampshire's motto, "Live Free or Die" should, in pragmatic terms, be interpreted to mean "live free or somehow manage to survive until the Supreme Court, in the fullness of time, changes its mind." □

IS U.S. PUBLIC OPINION SHIFTING?

NEW LOOK AT ISRAEL

DAVID CAPLOE

When Menahem Begin led the right-wing Likud coalition to victory in Israel's May 17th elections, a new era was opened in American-Israeli relations. This is not because Begin and the Likud represent a more intransigent position than Shimon Peres and the Labor Party on the vital questions of recognition of the Palestinians and territorial compromise with the Arab states. On the contrary (as Irene Gendzier pointed out in *The Nation* on June 18), analysis of the policies advocated by both the Likud and Labor on these issues reveals little substantive difference between them.

Rather, the unexpected emergence of a perceived hardliner like Begin as Israel's leader marks the beginning of a perceptible shift in the way Israel's case vis-à-vis the Arabs is viewed by American media and public opinion. That this shift in perception should occur against the backdrop of what looks like a concerted American drive for a West Bank Palestinian mini-state is an historical irony of the first order. To see how this irony developed, and what it may portend for the future of American-Israeli relations, we must first examine the motives underlying this new U.S. drive, and see what its implementation will require in political terms.

The logic of U.S. strategy (see *The Nation*, May 14) is simple: American influence and power are on the upswing all over the Arab world. Yet an American connection remains a political liability in much of that world because of the massive U.S. support given in the past to Israel—the living symbol to all Arabs, even those not directly displaced by it, of their humiliating colonial experience. In this regard, the continued homelessness of the Palestinians serves as a convenient focal point for resentment against incumbent Arab regimes that treat with the Americans. Thus the United States is impelled toward supporting some "settlement" of the Palestinian issue, and particularly one that will appear in Arab eyes to right an historic injustice.

But this inclination comes into conflict with the profound conviction in Israel, among policy makers and populace alike, that such a creation would be the first step toward the destruction of their state. Whatever the roots or reality of that feeling, it is a politically important consideration for two reasons: first, Israel is a major focus of United States military and strategic interests in the Middle East; and, second, almost unconditional support for Israel has heretofore received overwhelming endorsement from American public opinion. Thus, whatever the United States may want to do to solidify its control in the Arab world, it seems likely that the proposed resolution of the Palestinian question it supports will be one that does not jeopardize Israel's military and strategic dominance in the region.

David Caploe lived in Israel for eleven months in 1973-74, and while there wrote for the British monthly, Middle Eastern International. *He is now a fellow of the Trans-National Institute, from which he has a grant to write a book,* Zionism and the Arab-Israeli Conflict.

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A West Bank mini-state, sandwiched between Israel and Jordan—two militarily powerful neighbors hostile to it—would go a long way toward satisfying U.S. requirements. First, it would give the Palestinian leadership something tangible to protect. In principle, that should weaken whatever revolutionary impulse may exist among Palestinians and those of their Arab supporters who hope that the destruction of Israel will be a torch to set off revolution all over the Arab world. Second, it enables the Arab states—not noted in any case for their generosity toward their exiled Palestinian brethren—to tell the Palestinians that, since they now have a state of their own, they should stop complaining; to argue, in short, that four bloody and expensive wars fought against Israel on the Palestinians' behalf is enough. Finally, the dependence of such a state on either Jordan or Israel for its links with the outside world will insure effective U.S. control over the mini-state's level of military preparedness. In such fashion, the United States hopes the Palestinian issue can be defused in the Arab world, without affecting Israel's interests in any significant way.

But what looks neat and tidy from Washington may appear less so from Tel Aviv or Haifa. The adamant refusal of any significant sector of Israeli society or opinion to countenance even a weak and docile West Bank mini-state has roots too complex and diffuse to analyze here. It should be noted, however, that when Menahem Begin says there is no fundamental disagreement on this issue between his constituency and that of Labor Party leader Shimon Peres, he is correct.

Thus, as the Carter administration proceeds along the path toward a West Bank state, it can expect to meet serious antagonism, not only within Israel but also from among Israel's friends and allies in the United States. While it would be foolish to predict that America will "abandon" Israel, there can be little doubt that both advocates and opponents of the West Bank state will mobilize whatever resources they can to assure the adoption of the policy they deem desirable on a matter they all consider vital.

In this dispute, the role of American public opinion cannot be underestimated. It is obviously true that Israel's almost total military, economic and diplomatic dependence on the United States gives Washington carrots *and* sticks of impressive size. Yet the present administration, fearing a backlash at home, is most reluctant to use either carrot or stick to urge Israel in a direction it doesn't really want to take. That being the situation, the Israelis and their friends in this country will naturally paint the creation of a West Bank state in the blackest possible terms.

Meanwhile, those who favor a West Bank state will try to invalidate Israeli resistance by picturing it as an emotional and unreasonable—if understandable—display of intransigence. If that succeeds, Israel's American supporters will be on the defensive, unable to counter pro-West Bank state initiatives with the charge that they are morally indefensible. In that case, the unchallenged popularity of Israel that has limited the scope of American Middle East policy in the past would no longer have

Tachydromos (Greece)

such force. Thus, if the issue comes to a showdown, the United States will be in a position to remind Israel of its dependence in terms that American public opinion has previously made impossible.

In this context, it is helpful to recall the grounds on which America's public-opinion support of Israel is based. Perhaps the most important of these is a widely and deeply held perception of Israel's reasonableness, moderation and desire for peace, contrasted with the extremism, bellicosity and irrational blood lust of the Arabs. Ten years of occupation have somewhat tarnished that theme (as indicated, for example, in a report published by the *Sunday Times* of London, June 19, supporting oft-heard assertions that Israeli occupation forces systematically use torture in the West Bank). Nevertheless, the general image has stuck, and whatever its basis in fact, the Israeli characterization of the PLO as a "gang of murderers, terrorists and thugs" has deeply influenced the general American view of what has been going on in the Middle East.

But now that Begin is Prime Minister, this black-and-white portrayal of the antagonists has suffered a blow from which it may not recover. The reason, paradoxically enough, lies in the use made of Begin by the Labor Party he so recently turned out of office. Whenever in the past Israeli leaders were being pushed by the United States to do something they disliked, they would point to the florid statements of Begin and his cohorts, and argue that, while they would like to be forthcoming, their own domestic political considerations made it impossible. Begin and the rest of the Israeli right wing thus served as the "immovable object" that enabled the "conciliatory" Laborites to implement policies—such as Jewish settlements in the occupied territories—that were substantially in accord with right-wing policy. This use of Begin enabled the Labor party heads to act as they saw fit and yet avoid the wrath of American policy makers, who

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understood all too well the importance of domestic considerations in the formulation of foreign policy.

Accordingly, when Begin won the May 17th elections, whatever the American media and policy makers knew about him came from the stock of images accumulated over the years of Menahem Begin the wild man, whom even Israelis and American Zionists saw as a fanatically hotheaded demagogue. All that most Americans could pick up from the press in the immediate aftermath of the election was the somewhat alarming information that a man the British had called a terrorist, and whom even other Israelis and friends of Israel called an extremist, was to be the new head of state.

Until the morning of May 18, most Americans didn't even know there was a militant right wing in Israel. There came, thus, a double shock: not only to discover the existence of Israeli extremists but also to witness their rise to power. Most Americans felt they had reason to wonder about the accuracy of their previously held picture of insanely warlike Arabs menacing moderate, peace-loving Israelis.

In a very important sense, then, the election of Begin marks a dramatic turning point in the general perception of Israel in American eyes. Israel's domestic supporters now find themselves in the unaccustomed position of being at least partially on the moral defensive. As long as Menahem Begin is Premier, they cannot dismiss the demand for Israeli recognition of the PLO out of hand on the ground that it is comprised of "terrorists and murderers." To do so would leave them uncomfortably vulnerable to the charge that Israel's own Prime Minister is a former "terrorist" himself—a man even other Israelis and Zionists have charged with responsibility for the massacre of more than 250 Arabs at Dier Yassin village on April 9, 1948.

And even if the Begin government should fall within a year, the damage has already been done to Israel's unchallenged position of moral superiority. Once the moral pre-eminence of one side vis-à-vis its opponents has been so visibly and shockingly undercut, the entire framework of discourse on an issue is transformed. No longer does the certitude that one side is basically right and the other basically wrong condition the public's response to specific policy initiatives affecting both parties. Thus it seems unlikely that Israel's American supporters will ever again be able to reduce the complex set of issues that comprise the Arab-Israeli conflict to the simple moral equation of good versus evil and innocence versus malevolence. As a result, the range of U.S. policy options toward Israel that will henceforth be acceptable to the American public is now much wider than it was before Begin's election.

This is not to say that Americans have suddenly become pro-Palestinian, or anti-Israeli, or even come to the point of calling down a plague on both their houses. But it is to say that the American public has begun to examine its previously unquestioned assumption of Israeli righteousness vis-à-vis the Arabs. That this questioning begins in the midst of a U.S. push for a Palestinian mini-state seems likely to help proponents of the West Bank solution. But whatever its short-run implications, there is good reason to believe that the rise of Menahem Begin and the Israeli right wing has started a major shift in the way most Americans view the rights and wrongs of the Arab-Israeli conflict. □

'OUR S.O.B.s'

THE SOMOZAS OF NICARAGUA

PENNY LERNOUX

Zelaya, Nicaragua

Among the legends of Nicaragua is a creole version of the "Flying Dutchman" called "The Three Black Ships" —spectral vessels that eternally navigate the Great Lake of Nicaragua in search of a port. At night, narrates Nicaraguan poet Pablo Antonio Cuadra, the sailors call out to passing boats, "Which way to San Jorge? Where is Granada?" Years go by, the men grow old and the ships rot, but they never find the shore.

The legend, says Cuadra, is a parable on the tragedy of Nicaragua, forever adrift in a sea of violence and corruption, torn between dictatorship and U.S. intervention. The lake in the legend forms part of this curse; it is the main link in a chain of rivers and lakes that join the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. This waterway made Nicaragua a likely location for a trans-isthmian canal; even after Panama was chosen, the United States refused to relinquish its claim to Nicaragua as an alternative site.

Neighboring Costa Rica, with its high and rugged mountains, was better served by nature, its geography unsuitable to a canal and therefore of no interest to the United States. Costa Rica has enjoyed a stable democracy for most of this century; Nicaragua has suffered 128 years of U.S. military and economic intervention. For the past four decades, the country has been disastrously run by the Somoza dynasty, whose founder, Gen. Anastasio Somoza García, was handpicked by the United States.

The largest nation in Central America with an area about the size of England and Wales combined, Nicaragua is among the least populated and the poorest. In any Latin American census on literacy, health and income rates, Nicaragua is at the bottom, along with Guatemala and Haiti. Most of the industry and infrastructure are crowded into a narrow belt in the southwestern part of the country between the lakes and the Pacific Ocean, the principal city being Managua, the capital, with one-quarter of Nicaragua's 2.2 million population.

The eastern half of Nicaragua, called the department of Zelaya, is another world entirely, a vast region of jungle and rain forest where primitive Indian tribes still

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roam, a place of great beauty and terrible brutality that has changed little since English pirates caught green turtle along the Miskitos coast.

It is in this area, more than in the cities of southwestern Nicaragua, that one sees the awful consequences of U.S. intervention, in the freshly dug graves of peasant families that form a macabre chain across the northern rain forests of Zelaya and the neighboring departments of Matagalpa, Jinotega and Nueva Segovia. There is hardly a family in this terror-stricken region that has not suffered from a brutal campaign supported by the U.S. Government to destroy a band of left-wing guerrillas. Approximately fifty in number, the guerrillas have never enjoyed significant peasant support, yet the Nicaraguan military has wiped out whole districts on the convenient pretext of guerrilla collaboration.

"People are so frightened that they don't dare to protest the arrest of a close relative," said a peasant recently released from the prison at Rio Blanco, military headquarters for northern Nicaragua. The man's two eldest sons are still in the Rio Blanco jail, but he claimed it would do no good to complain to the local authorities. "They would just put me back in jail. It is in God's hands whether I ever see my sons again."

Under a state of siege decreed in December 1974, Nicaragua's National Guard, which doubles as army and police, can hold anyone indefinitely without trial, no matter how flimsy the charge. In Managua a prisoner has some hope of eventually seeing a lawyer; there is no such recourse in the isolated northern departments, where the local National Guard commanders rule like Roman proconsuls. There are no roads in this region, no newspapers, no court of appeal. According to Nicaragua's Catholic Church, 224 peasants have been massacred by the National Guard since February 1976, and the killing continues. None of the peasants I talked to had any sympathy for the guerrillas. "We are like the meat in the middle of a sandwich," said one peasant. "If we don't give the guerrillas food, they threaten to kill us. If we give them food, then the military kills us."

Although guerrilla warfare is part of Nicaragua's historical tradition, the peasants have rarely been anything but pawns in a power struggle between the country's competing political elites. One exception was the 1927-33 war waged against the U.S. Marines by Gen. Augusto César Sandino and his peasant supporters—a preview of Vietnam. [See the series of articles written by Carleton Beals and published in *The Nation* between February 22 and April 18, 1928.] Betrayed and assassinated by General Somoza in 1934, Sandino lives on in legend; and in 1961 some left-wing university students formed the Sandinista Front of National Liberation (FSLN) to fight the regime of Somoza's second son, Anastasio Somoza Debayle.

The FSLN's one and only international coup occurred, not in the northern rain forests of Nicaragua but in Managua when, in December 1974, they attacked the residence of a prominent Nicaraguan during a reception for the U.S. Ambassador, seizing forty-one hostages and

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killing three. To obtain the hostages' release, Somoza was forced to free fourteen guerrillas from prison, give the Sandinistas $1 million in ransom and a plane to fly to Cuba, and publish a 12,000-word denunciation of his own government as "the most despicable dictatorship in Latin America."

Ten Sandinistas returned from Cuba to continue the fight in the northern rain forests, with disastrous results. During 1976, most of the leadership was killed or jailed, leaving a force of fewer than fifty militants to carry on the fight.

Unlike Sandino who had worked with miners and peasants all his life, most of the FSLN survivors are the sons of Nicaragua's middle and upper classes and therefore unable to communicate with the region's peasants, who "just want to be left alone." Contrary to what President Somoza would have the United States believe, the FSLN is no threat. As Ernesto "Che" Guevara recorded in his diary of the fateful Bolivian campaign, urban-born, university-educated guerrillas simply do not know how to talk to suspicious, illiterate peasants. Following the pattern of Venezuela's Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN), which collapsed in the late 1960s, the FSLN has been reduced to a tiny, hit-and-run campaign designed primarily to attract international publicity. The chief casualties of this campaign have not been National Guardsmen, however, but the peasants—a "bunch of no-good, Communist subversives," in the words of one of the military commanders, although the peasants have not the slightest idea what communism is, except that it is "something bad."

Typical of the ongoing terror was the National Guard's slaughter of forty peasants last year in the district of Sofana in western Zelaya. The people had lived in a state of fear ever since 1974 when the National Guard

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brought in fifteen peasants from the neighboring department of Matagalpa and shot and buried them in Sofana. In August 1975, guerrillas were sighted in the neighborhood, and a delegation from Sofana visited military authorities to ask for protection and thus avoid being caught in the cross fire. A National Guard patrol was stationed in Sofana but left after a month.

In November, Sofana's assistant justice of the peace was attacked by a group of guerrillas who surrounded his hut at night. The man was unable to call for help, since the nearest house was a mile away. (There are few proper villages in the north.) He managed to fight off the guerrillas with a machete but was wounded by a bullet in the arm.

After this incident, Sofana's fifty families met at the district's rustic chapel to decide whether to move to Siuna, a town to the north, or come together in a small village for mutual protection. They never did decide because in February 1976, five National Guard patrols stormed the district. "They had a list of names," said an eyewitness, "and they moved from one isolated hut to the next, taking the men out, beating and torturing them in front of their families, demanding that they confess the names of guerrilla collaborators in the area. These men were then marched out into the fields and shot."

Among the peasants killed were the seven García brothers who had formed the backbone of the community and owned some 1,200 acres along the Iyas River. The land has since passed into the hands of Commander Gonzalo Evertz, National Guard chief of the northern military region until his promotion last year to head the Managua traffic department. He is remembered in the region, not only for his ferocity but for his unusual suspenders, which were covered with U.S. insignia. They were no doubt a souvenir from one of the nine courses he has taken in counterinsurgency and police training in the Panama Canal Zone and the United States.

One begins to see the method behind the mad pursuit of the fifty elusive guerrillas. Many of the massacres are the result of the National Guard's greed for the spoils of war, including land, cattle and women: or because of old feuds within the community. Forty-four men, women and children were shot by the military in the Varilla district of Zelaya last January, after the local justice of the peace had denounced the head of the Gonzalez family as a guerrilla collaborator. There was no evidence to support this charge—and it was known that the judge and Gonzalez had been at odds ever since the latter accused the judge of pocketing a collection taken up in the community to build a fence around the chapel. Nevertheless, the National Guard slaughtered the entire Gonzalez family, their married daughters and their families, including twenty-nine children, burying the bodies in a common pit. The lieutenant in charge of the slaughter continues to terrorize the region.

And while "there is no justice in such terror," as one Zelaya farmer said, there are reasons beyond greed and revenge for the repression. People fearful for their lives do not protest against smaller things like the lack of schools and medical facilities or the slave wages paid by the large cattle ranchers. "It is enough to stay alive," said an old peasant.

Without such basic community structures as schools and agricultural clubs and cooperatives, it is unlikely that the Nicaraguan peasant will ever be more than a beast of burden. (Fifty-five percent of the country's population are peasants, with an annual per capita income of less than $120.) "Teaching people to think is the worst crime you can commit under this government," said a rural teacher whose school was recently closed by the National Guard.

After a decade of work in the Zelaya region, Capuchin priests from the United States were beginning to see the fruits of their labor in rural schools, agricultural clubs, homemakers' associations and medical units. The Capuchins' message was simple: people who work and worship together can achieve a better life for themselves and their community.

In some areas, like the districts along the Prinzapolka River, this message has saved the people from the National Guard. There are no *orejas*, or informers, to tell lies, and when a member of the community is falsely accused by the military or a large rancher, the people unite behind him. Thanks to the Capuchins, these peasants have some awareness of their legal rights. In other areas, however, many of the community structures built up over the years have been destroyed by the National Guard. All but five of the thirty agricultural extension clubs in the area around Siuna have been closed on the ground that they might be "subversive."

Zelaya's 186 rural schools are also in trouble. A self-help program begun two years ago to teach peasants to teach their children, the schools were performing well until early this year when the government ordered the National Guard to take over their administration as part of its "civic action" program, a U.S.-supported operation that smacks suspiciously of the "strategic hamlet" strategy in Vietnam. A regional teachers' course was canceled in March, and many teachers have not been paid for months.

Zelaya's chapels and community centers have also been violated by the military, which last year used twenty-six chapels as barracks and torture centers and as places to rape the peasant women. Catholic lay leaders have been singled out for arrest and torture. One Zelaya "Delegate of the Word," as these laymen are called, was left tied up for several days in the chapel, then beaten and tortured for three months. He is no longer a leader but a vegetable.

Zelaya's peasant population has increased by 47 percent in the past decade, primarily because of migration from neighboring departments where the large cattle ranches have gradually absorbed peasant holdings. Now the process is being repeated in Zelaya. For example, the Rio Blanco commander recently authorized the takeover of lands south of the Dudu River by a large cattle rancher with adjacent holdings along the Matagalpa-Zelaya frontier. Of the original 100 peasant families living on these lands, only eighteen are left; the rest having fled or "disappeared," a euphemism for murder by the military.

In a January pastoral letter denouncing "arbitrary detentions, torture, rape and executions without previous trial" in the northern departments, Nicaragua's Catholic

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bishops emphasized "the increasing concentration of land and wealth at the expense of humble peasants who have been dispossessed of their fields." The process is well advanced: 1,800 ranches occupy 50 percent of the cultivated land, with 96,000 small farms crowded into the remainder. Another 200,000 peasants are without land. The Somoza family alone owns 8,260 square miles or more than 5 million acres.

Nobody knows how many peasants have died or been arrested throughout the country in the past two years. Deputy Julio Molina, one of two members of the Nicaraguan Congress's newly created Commission on Human Rights who is genuinely interested in the issue, reports that all attempts to investigate the situation in the north have been blocked by the Defense Ministry or the pro-Somoza members of the commission, who form a majority. Another member of the commission complained to me that "the people are afraid to ask others to serve as witnesses because of reprisals."

"It is terribly sad," he added, "but most of these peasants are fatalistic. They come to us to find out whether their relatives are alive or dead so they can say a rosary for them if they are dead. They never protest or demand justice."

Zelaya seemed a thousand miles away from the elegant Managua restaurant where my host and I sipped martinis while he described government corruption and Somoza's grip on the local economy. "Better lower your voice," I told him, nervously eyeing a hovering waiter. (If this had been Uruguay or Chile, I thought, we would both be in jail by now.)

Despite my warnings, the man continued to talk blithely about repression, government bribes and a coming devaluation. Later, when I continued to express concern, he explained that there are two sets of rules for the regime's critics, depending on whether you are rich and socially prominent (criticism allowed) or poor and helpless (certain arrest). Except for forty-six Sandinistas, Managua's jails are not bulging with political prisoners. Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, editor of the opposition daily, *La Prensa*, is allowed to speak frankly with U.S. Embassy officials even if the paper itself is censored. And the last massacre of political opponents in Managua took place a decade ago.

It is impossible to imagine the magnitude of Somoza's repression from the luxurious homes of Managua's rich, even though they do criticize the government; and since theirs is the standard of living of most State Department officials, it is understandable, though unforgivable, that the Embassy has consistently maintained an ostrich-like attitude toward the violations of human rights in Nicaragua. (While in Nicaragua, I was told that two Embassy officials actually had gone up to the north that week and that they were surprised to learn about the repression of peasants. "Can you imagine," said my indignant informant, "they really wanted to know 'why no one had told us about this before!' ")

Actually, the Nicaraguans have been trying to tell the Americans about Somoza for decades. Back in the 1930s no one wanted to listen. As Franklin Roosevelt once remarked, "Somoza may be a son of a bitch, but he's our son of a bitch."

Having created the National Guard to replace the U.S. Marines who had occupied the country on and off between 1909 and 1933, the United States appointed Somoza as its head and approved his seizure of the Presidency in 1936. Neither a military leader nor a statesman, Somoza was nevertheless judged qualified for the job because he spoke English. He also gave lavish cocktail parties for U.S. diplomats.

The United States had intervened in Nicaraguan politics for so long that no one in Washington saw anything amiss in Somoza's appointment. Ever since the California Gold Rush of 1849, when thousands of miners crossed the Nicaraguan mainland, Washington had insisted on a U.S. monopoly over the country's lake-and-river system as a possible canal route, and a series of treaties were duly signed by subservient Nicaraguan Governments. The only exception was President José Santos Zelaya, who was smartly booted out of office for initiating canal negotiations with the Japanese.

Somoza and his sons have always been careful to respect U.S. hegemony, and the population be damned. That explains why Washington has conveniently ignored or aided and abetted the forty-one-year reign of terror that has cost the lives of 25,000 people. "I'll give this country peace if I have to kill every other man in Nicaragua to get it," promised Somoza Senior.

It is hardly surprising that Nicaraguans blame the United States for this long purgatory, since Washington has consistently intervened on the Somozas' behalf, even as recently as 1972 when 600 Marines were sent to Managua to keep the peace after the December earthquake. In the Nicaraguan countryside, "*gringo*" is used to describe a Somoza supporter, and National Guardsmen are called "rangers," the term for a member of the U.S. Special Forces.

Three-quarters of the 7,500-man National Guard have been trained by the U.S. military in Nicaragua, the Panama Canal Zone and the mainland war colleges. Counter-insurgency courses in the Pentagon's School of the Americas in the Panama Canal Zone are frequently of a comic-book simplicity regarding communism. They reinforce the National Guard's conservatism and its belief that any suggestion of change, such as Christian communities, is Communist-inspired.

Contrary to State Department claims that no U.S. military assistance or training goes to the National Guard for its police functions, either in Managua or in the interior departments, Col. Gonzalo Evertz was very much involved in such activities as commander of the northern military zone, and he is one of the Pentagon's star pupils. As for the civic action programs that are supposed to justify $3.1 million in U.S. military assistance to Nicaragua this year, anyone who has been in Zelaya recently, as I have, can unequivocally state that these projects do not "contribute positively toward national, social and economic development," as the State Department claims, unless the Department believes that killing peasants is a positive contribution.

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AID's $14 million assistance to civic action through the Institute of Peasant Development (INVIERNO) is also questionable, since the project includes a data bank on the local population which can provide valuable information to the National Guard in its campaign against the peasants. Moreover, many of the INVIERNO schools established under civic action programs are run by military informers, according to the peasants.

It should also be noted that, while the National Guard has an excellent record in killing peasants, it has not done nearly so well in individual combat with the guerrillas, although it has received $13.2 million in U.S. aid since 1970 precisely to cope with this threat. During a December 1976 offensive against a guerrilla camp in Las Nubes Mountains, for example, National Guard planes bombed their own people, radio communications broke down, and the military ran out of ammunition. By the time the military returned to the attack on Christmas Day, the guerrillas, noticing the disturbance, had long since departed.

According to a Nicaraguan Congressman, the National Guard is "a poorly organized group of gangsters with continuous desertions and no loyalty to the institution itself.

"Somoza does not control the military because he does not want to," he said, adding that "as long as there are a few guerrillas in the hills, Somoza can cry wolf to the U.S. Congress whenever there is a threat to cut off aid."

According to Fernando Cardenal, a Jesuit, there is a "tremendous cynicism" in the State Department's rebuttals of any criticism of the Somoza regime. The charge is echoed by other members of the Nicaraguan Catholic Church, who are particularly critical of U.S. Ambassador James Theberge, an apologist for the Somoza regime until President Carter began his campaign for human rights.

After Cardenal testified on human rights violations in Nicaragua before the U.S. House Subcommittee on International Organizations last year, the State Department tried to suggest that he was a spokesman for FSLN propaganda, although his account was thoroughly documented.

Cardenal also correctly charged the Somoza government with the misuse of AID funds for reconstruction of Managua after the 1972 earthquake that killed 10,000 people and left 250,000 homeless. It is not necessary to study the city's property transfer records to guess who got the aid. Downtown Managua, most of which was destroyed, still looks like a Stanley Kubrick movie set, with block after block of burnt-out buildings bending dangerously over the fields of weeds. This former core of the city has now been replaced by a series of expensive, Los Angeles-like shopping centers distributed around the wealthier residential sectors. The poor, who used to crowd the streets of downtown Managua, got no shopping center, presumably because they cannot afford Kentucky Fried Chicken, bowling alleys or Big Macs.

What they received, instead, was a series of slums such as the AID-financed "Las Americas" housing project with its open sewers and its matchbox houses, which cost $3,000 each and barely accommodate two cots.

Miner's Hovel at Noranda Mines

Typical of the sort of hanky-panky that went on during the reconstruction boom was the purchase of 93.6 acres of land east of Managua for $71,428 on July 4, 1975, by Rafael Adonis Porras, Somoza's military aide. A little more than two months later, Porras sold 56.8 acres of the land to the government for a housing construction project for $1.7 million.

Under prodding by the General Accounting Office, AID eventually commissioned a study of such land purchases by a reputable firm of Nicaraguan lawyers. It showed the "direct participation of government employees in the land transactions, prior knowledge of land transfer and gain thereof by government officials, inflated land values of up to 1,156 percent over a three-month period and lack of any ethics in transactions in which the public sector was involved."

The Somoza family also reaped millions, not only as owners of the only cement plant in Nicaragua but as partners in most of the deals. As one Managua businessman pointed out, "In a country as small as Nicaragua where the Somozas own the forty-six biggest companies and dominate the economy, nobody is going to put his hand in the government till without the Somozas' consent."

Foreign bankers privately admit that it is impossible to do business in Nicaragua without paying a bribe. But once that formality is observed, the Somoza government promises a ten-year tax haven, *laissez-faire* remittance and exchange laws, and "limited union activity," to quote a government pamphlet for foreign investors.

The foreign-owned mining companies have only to call in the National Guard and, presto, there are no more labor problems. Employees of the La Luz gold mine in Zelaya, which is owned by ASARCO of New York, are frequently paid below the legal minimum of 32¢ an hour. Legal norms for health services and food are likewise ignored. The La Luz labor inspector who is supposed to enforce the laws is in a poor position

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to do so. Owner of the only service station in town, he depends on the mining company for his gasoline.

The conditions in La Luz are infinitely better than those in the gold mines of El Setentrion owned by Noranda Mines of Toronto and located in the volcano belt north of Managua in the cotton-growing department of León. The land is racked by hot blasts of air that parch the throat and cover everything with a thick layer of dust. Along the dirt roads are the pathetic mud-and-cane lean-tos of the peasant families who tend the cotton. Noranda's mining towns are not much better. Santa Pancha, for example, is a collection of wooden shacks and mud lean-tos where prostitutes sit outside the dismal cantinas. There is running water only one hour a day, and it comes from the mines, is chemically impure and so hot that it will boil an egg. Children get sick from drinking it.

Terrible as conditions are above ground, they cannot compare with the inferno in the mines where temperatures sometimes exceed 110°F. and safety precautions are nil. Silicosis is rife among the 1,000 miners working for Noranda. The company takes X-rays of the workers every six months, but the miners never see them "so we don't know how sick we are," explained one shriveled miner.

Until last year, when a group of workers challenged the corrupt, company-controlled union, wages in the mines were only 15¢ an hour, 5¢ below the legal minimum at that time. As a result of the strike organized by the dissidents, the company was forced to increase wages to 38¢ an hour. It also promised to dig several wells for the people, but so far only one has been dug. The young men who led the strike have paid dearly for their courage. Eight were jailed by the National Guard in February, after the Canadian company charged them with blowing up a water tank and collaborating with the guerrillas, charges the miners deny. One of the union leaders was freed after the U.S. labor attaché intervened. The dissident union has been decapitated and the young men have lost their jobs for being "rebellious," as Canadian Supt. Edward Hagg called them.

Timoteo Acuna, head of the company-supported union, says there is nothing to protest. And from his viewpoint that may well be true. He lives in the mines' principal town, El Limón, in a spacious house with a 24-inch television set, a refrigerator, record player and running water. Two of his sons are in the National Guard and one of them has been trained in the Panama Canal Zone. The mines' foreign personnel naturally live even better, their neat, painted houses with flowering gardens judiciously set at a distance from the miners' hovels.

Nicaraguans work in the Noranda mines only because the conditions in the surrounding countryside are worse. Eighty percent of the peasants in the department of León own no land, their lean-to shacks literally on top of the road, and they are not going to own any land as long as the big cotton growers have their way. Otherwise, who would pick the cotton?

Four decades of such treatment, in the city slums as well as the countryside, have left a profound mark on the people. Few peasants I talked to would look me in the face. Instead, they hung their heads, shuffled their feet, stuttered and cracked their knuckles nervously. "The people are scared twenty-four hours a day," Pedro Joaquin Chamorro had said. I could see it was true.

And yet I also saw enough signs of hope to believe that Somoza has not entirely crushed the people, particularly the young. There was the young mother in Managua's Open slum, for example, who rises every dawn to make *empanadas* to sell in a distant city market where she works all day. The woman also cares for five children, attends the fourth grade at a night school and still finds time for community activities.

She was one of 2,000 Open inhabitants who last year joined together to protest the high price of water imposed by the privately owned water company (Open was paying twice the rates levied on Managua's wealthy residential sectors). Instead of running away when National Guard trucks arrived to break up a demonstration, as had always happened in the past, she and hundreds like her stood their ground, shouting insults at the police.

The inhabitants of Open are not about to denounce Somoza publicly, of course, but among themselves they will tell you about the daily horrors of life under his regime, including the 15-year-old girl who was raped by three National Guardsmen recently and the 8-month-old baby who died of smallpox in the city hospital because of the crowded, unhygienic conditions (three babies to a crib).

Theirs may be a less eloquent litany than the stories I heard in the homes of the middle and upper classes but, in the final analysis, it is the poor people of Nicaragua who most deserve a hearing since it is they who have suffered the most. And what they are saying is, "Yankees, go home."

"As long as you Americans support Somoza," a young baker told me, "we will never be rid of him."

While it is not easy for the United States to stop playing the colonial power of bygone days, perhaps, under the Carter administration, the time has come. But if the United States is sincere in its desire to end its support of Somoza, it must do more than cut off direct economic and military aid. As long as the Somoza dynasty is supported by such multinational lending agencies as the Inter-American Development Bank and by government guarantees for U.S. investment, it will remain immune to the people's cry for justice. For it is money, finally, that allows Somoza to terrorize the nation.

There are those who would say that such interference by Washington in the affairs of international bankers is just another form of intervention. But since when has the United States taken a neutral position toward these lending institutions? Mr. Nixon certainly had no such qualms when he ordered his underlings to bankrupt Salvador Allende's Chile.

In any case, there is no such thing as neutrality in a situation like that of Nicaragua. As the Catholic bishops there pointed out in a pastoral letter, the failure to act is in itself a political decision. "What is really at stake," said the bishops, "is the human dignity of our people, their rights and demands for justice and a better society. This is not a partisan issue but a political one in the widest possible sense. It is a question of ethics." □

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'Dollarizing' the Russian Forces

EDWARD AERIE

In the summer of 1975 Department of Defense analysts sharply raised estimates of Soviet defense spending. Earlier CIA estimates of this spending were condemned, both as understating the cost of Soviet defense in relation to the American and as minimizing the share of Soviet gross national product (GNP) falling to defense outlays. After joint discussions, the CIA in the spring of 1976 acceded to the Defense Department's evaluation and confessed that it had underestimated Soviet defense spending for the past decade. In official releases and newspaper accounts it was acknowledged, as a shy afterthought, that the new figures in no way indicated a revision of the previously estimated *size* of the Soviet military effort, but only of its cost. Nevertheless, these estimates were equated with a Soviet "military buildup," a description frequently preceded by the adjectives "rapid," "massive," "unprecedented" or "relentless." As observed by ex-Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, the public was given "a water treatment" of continual repetition of this equation, so that the concepts of quantity and expense blended in the public consciousness.

The new estimates and the Soviet military buildup they insinuated were well publicized during late 1975 and early 1976 and helped the Ford administration to gain Congressional approval of its "turn-around" defense budget in 1976, despite the strong domestic and international vectors pointing to an expected retrenchment in defense priorities. Since that time the asserted surge in Soviet military spending has been accepted as self-evident by liberals and conservatives, doves and hawks, humble reporters and editorial pundits alike—a somewhat baffling unanimity, since the new estimates are not based on new facts but derive their force from renovated assumptions and slackened categorizations. Conventional skeptics of even the old official estimates yielded to the new, as though they had collapsed from mental fatigue.

The manifesto of the expanded estimates of Soviet defense expenditure was an essay, "Comparisons of U.S. and S.U. Defense Expenditures" by Dr. Andrew W. Marshall, director of Net Assessment of the Department of Defense, published in the fall of 1975 in a report of the Joint Economic Committee of Congress on allocation of resources in the Soviet Union and China. Marshall disparaged the CIA estimates which, in his view, had applied U.S. costs too sparingly to Soviet defense and had failed to spot the total resources absorbed by Soviet defense. Whereas the latest (1974) CIA estimate of Soviet spending stood at about 119 percent of American spending, Marshall suggested a percentage of 130 to 150. The proportion of Soviet GNP consumed by defense, which the CIA had reported as 6 to 8 percent for recent years, Marshall rejected in favor of a proportion of 10 to 20 percent. Marshall's re-evaluation became the buttress for the new coordinated CIA-Defense Department estimates issued in February and May 1976 and January 1977; even his percentages constitute, with some refinement, the framework of these estimates.

Official appraisers of Soviet defense spending obtain their jobs because the USSR's policy is to keep its specific defense data secret. The only expenditure information published in the Soviet press is the annual overall budgetary appropriation for defense. This appropriation nearly doubled between 1960 and 1970 (after decreasing by 17 percent between 1952 and 1960), but stabilized at 17.9 billion rubles between 1970 and 1973 and dropped to 17.7 billion in 1974, 17.4 billion in 1975 and 1976, and 17.2 billion for 1977.

American estimators dispute this trend, claiming a steady increase in Soviet spending for the 1970-76 period, at 3 percent annually under the old CIA estimates and 4 to 5 percent under the new. The difference between these two growth estimates, as in the magnitude estimates, is purely a matter of re-evaluating cost, not quantity, though the old estimates are misleadingly portrayed as failing to reflect the intensity of the Soviet "buildup." The Soviet budgetary figures, which contradict them both, are of course dismissed as propaganda by the Americans.

From numerous studies made in the West of Soviet defense spending, one may distinguish three levels of estimating or evaluating defense expenditure: (*1*) the output level, or what the Soviets provide in military strength; (*2*) the input level, or the direct cost of producing and utilizing the military output annually budgeted, and (*3*) the burden level, or the ultimate cost to the society of supporting the military establishment, often conceived as an "opportunity cost," or what must be foregone as a result of defense outlays.

The main concern in budgeting the American national defense should be the first or output level of estimation. Threat to national security stems from the size of the opponent's defense effort, not from its cost or burden. The nation should have a collateral interest in the second or input level of the opponent's defense, not to gauge threats but to compare defense efficiencies of both sides in order to spot waste or uneconomical practices. The third or burden level of estimating has no practical bearing on our own defense budgeting, except perhaps to place in the public mind a psychological inflation of the opponent's militaristic determination. Nor can the total burden of defense really be measured. Ultimate costs rely too much upon unpredictable political, sociological and psychological factors to judge their bearability, and have a tendency to enlarge in direct proportion to the estimator's distrust of the Soviet Union. In effect, burden estimates have been ideological exercises to support preformed judgments about Soviet militarism and civilian ne-

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glect. (Burden estimating can be played in reverse too. The prominent defense critic and author, Seymour Melman of Columbia University, argues that the opportunity cost of American defense since World War II is the obsolescence of the total capital stock, the bulk of inflation, and the decay of the urban infrastructure. While it may be disputable to charge such a steep cost to defense alone, some of the standard assertions about the Soviet defense burden are at least as disputable.)

In estimating the output level of Soviet defense, the CIA prices and aggregates output units—men, weapons and operations—in dollars, that is, in the prices that the United States would have to pay to finance them. In estimating the input and burden levels, U.S. intelligence estimates the costs in rubles in order to obtain an aggregate view of what the Soviets pay and sacrifice for their annual defense outlay.

The greater part of Andrew Marshall's exposition deals with the costs and burdens rather than the substance of Soviet defense. His thrust is to prove that they have been sorely underestimated by the CIA. In order to accept his conclusion, one must first accommodate a host of assumptions, some of them original, some of them used more sparingly in the old estimates, and all of them weakly grounded in fact.

These assumptions include the notion that the dispersal of Soviet industry is determined by military strategy, implying that the dispersal is uneconomic and to that extent a "military" burden. Another assumption is that the expenses of maintaining a military presence on the Sino-Soviet border are "extraordinary," even if completely unknown. Marshall refers to "new information," not specified, that suggests that the Soviet defense industry is less efficient than formerly thought by American intelligence and therefore a greater drain on resources than earlier indicated (a case of one assumption displacing another). The fact that recently observed Soviet troop carriers and antiaircraft guns are more elaborate, and therefore more expensive, than had been suspected is used to deduce that the whole spectrum of Soviet arms costs more than the CIA had calculated. Marshall also asserts, with no direct supporting data, that the prices of weapons in the Soviet Union are subsidized and not determined, as in this country, by "market forces." (One wonders what market forces operate in the pre-assigned, profit-laden defense contracts let by the Pentagon.) He repeats a well-frayed assumption that military research and development (R&D) receives the cream of Soviet scientific talent, laboratory equipment and other scarce resources. This assertion is aided by the conventional estimator practice of loosely labeling as "military" all R&D with any remotely military potential—which would include the best endowed research in any industrial society. Finally, with superb casuistry, Marshall argues that the opportunity cost of maintaining a serviceman is higher in the Soviet Union than in the United States, since the Soviet economy is labor-short while the American economy has a surplus of labor and can more easily spare a worker from the civilian sector. A strange argument against full employment!

Konopacki

Even those able to digest these assumptions should feel their credulity strained when the assumptions are translated with so much assurance into numbers—into so many rubles and such and such a proportion of GNP. This is especially so because the old estimates, revised on the basis of the assumptions, were based on assumptions or degrees of assumption of their own.

The CIA's new ruble estimates of Soviet spending incorporate the insights developed or refurbished by Marshall. Before 1976 the CIA was less quick than the Department of Defense to write off the published Soviet defense budget. In its pre-1976 estimates the CIA accepted it as a basis for the actual ruble outlay, but arbitrarily added two-thirds of the Soviet science budget as presumed military R&D, thus bringing total defense spending up to 26 billion to 29 billion rubles between 1970 and 1975. But in 1976 the CIA, having adopted the new Marshallian ground rules, raised its estimate to 50 billion to 55 billion rubles for 1975—almost doubling the old estimate. In effect, the new estimate accused the Soviet Union of concealing or underpricing about two-thirds of its defense outlay.

The CIA's estimate of Soviet defense spending for 1975 was $124 billion in current prices. Thus, in the sphere of defense the ruble is assigned the purchasing power of about $2.50. (The official exchange rate of $1.34 to the ruble is irrelevant here since it does not reflect the ruble's purchasing power for all types of goods and services.) The dollar estimates are made by measuring the output level of defense—that is, by adding together the physical counts of Soviet defense components made by U.S. intelligence, and assigning American prices to them. Marshall does not quarrel with the counts of Soviet defense elements, only with their dollar assessment. To fathom his dissatisfaction with the dollar estimates one must digress to examine the CIA's methodology of dollar estimation.

The CIA procedure, as explained in June 1975 by

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former Director William Colby, is to "estimate what it would cost in the United States to develop, procure, and man a military force of the same size and with the same inventory of weapons as that fielded by the Soviets. We also figure in what it would cost to operate that force as the Soviets do." This procedure, which in principle might be adequate to produce a rough comparison of aggregate Soviet and U.S. defense spending, is flawed by two biases that work, as might be expected, in the direction of exaggeration—even in the CIA's pre-1976 estimates.

The first bias is that the dollar estimates assign to the Soviet military effort the generally higher real costs of the American effort. When "dollarizing" Soviet defense it is thought necessary to invest it with the relative extravagances that suffuse American defense, but are absent or restrained in the Soviet Union—the high salaries of volunteer troops as against the paltry allowances to Soviet conscripts; the cost of developing, producing, and maintaining a more sophisticated overall system of weaponry; high profit margins of U.S. defense corporations, and the logistical dispersion and foreign rental payments entailed by American overseas bases. Any increases in U.S. costs or troop pay automatically produce an increase in estimated Soviet defense spending, even though the Soviet Union may not have spent an extra ruble between annual estimates. The CIA, it is true, makes some downward adjustments in the conversion to dollars by taking account of Soviet differences in areas such as weapon design and personnel perquisites, where a lower input is made per unit of output than in this country.

But these adjustments only skim over the surface. They do not touch the deeper differences caused by the American tradition of political largesse for defense interests and the U.S. "forward" global defense strategy. Accordingly, the generally simpler design and construction of Soviet arms, if known and measurable, entitle them to a lower dollar manufacturing cost than analogous American arms. But the American institutional price structure, which rests upon the lesser efficiency of defense industry relative to civilian industry, high profits and lax procurement practices, is fully transferred by the CIA to the Soviet Union setting. It is doubtful that the CIA makes sufficient, if any, discounts for the high use costs per man and weapon imposed by the American forward defense system. Furthermore, the CIA discounts are highly eclectic. They include, for instance, reductions in certain manpower costs, such as health care, pensions and aid to dependents, but no reductions are made in salaries, allowances and food costs, which are similarly much smaller per capita in the Soviet armed forces than in ours.

The second bias derives from the fact that the numbers of Soviet military components—men and weapons—by which dollar costs per component are multiplied must themselves be estimated on the basis of intelligence, since they are not revealed by the Soviet Union. These component estimates are the basis of the annual posture statements for the Soviet Union made by the Department of Defense. The intelligence is gathered and interpreted, not only by the CIA but by the entire intelligence community, including the Department of Defense. The nature of this information or even what is done with it is, for the most part, tightly classified, so that any outside analysis or verification is barred, except occasionally to screened and cleared observers of hard-line orientation. One can only trust that the data are treated objectively and that the inferences drawn from them are no more than the data can bear. Annual Soviet arms production, for example, not being published in the Soviet Union, is probably deduced from random observations, such as defector reports, level of equipment of visible military units, and satellite photographs. If the amount of annual production of a particular weapon is estimated on the basis of such observations, what is the quality of the conclusions that intervene between observation and estimate—how typical is the observed military unit, how reliable is a defector's supportive information, what is the annual replacement rate of the weapon in question, what is the proportion of new to older weapons?

The treatment currently given estimated military manpower does not lend confidence in this regard. Somewhat surprisingly, in view of the festering Sino-Soviet tension during the past decade and a half, the number of Soviet men under arms has remained highly stable since 1959 at roughly 3.6 million (3.65 million in 1976), according to Soviet census data and the updating estimates of the prestigious British International Institute for Strategic Studies. The CIA and the Defense Department, on the contrary, have claimed an alarming growth in the number of servicemen to 4.8 million in 1976. Before 1976 the CIA had placed the number at about 4.2 million, but only by adding to the British estimate internal security personnel and border guards, whose mission is not warfare and who could be shifted to combat status no more readily than National Guardsmen and civilian police in Western countries. The extra 600,000 men added in 1976 were obtained, as lynx-eyed Rep. Les Aspin of the House Armed Services Committee spotted, by reclassifying that many civilians in the Soviet Ministry of Defense as members of the armed services. In the much more variegated sphere of weaponry, the possibilities for such estimating manuevers are almost infinite.

How then do these characteristics of inflation in the CIA's dollar estimates square with Marshall's contention that the estimates understate the dollar cost of Soviet defense? Essentially, Marshall's argument ignores the first bias of the dollar estimates (attribution of U.S. real costs to Soviet defense) and refuses to entertain the second bias (likely tendentiousness in defense component estimates). He does not deny, but has no interest in, the tendency of CIA dollar estimates to raise the general level of real costs in the Soviet context. His criticism is vented on the discounts that the CIA makes in partial adjustment to Soviet reality. For Marshall the calculation of real Soviet defense costs, no matter how limited this calculation by the CIA really is, is not the proper purpose of the dollar estimates—discounting the dollar price of a Soviet defense component is justified only if the discount reflects a military inferiority, not a lower real cost. The true aim of dollarization, according to Marshall,

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should be to determine the hypothetical cost to the United States of duplicating the whole Soviet defense package ("the physical dimensions and operation capabilities of the Soviet military"). This implies that, because U.S. institutions, practices, living standards and social constraints are different from those of the Soviets, the United States cannot possibly reproduce the Soviet package at their lower real costs. Things simply cost more in the United States, and if this fact is not woven into the dollar estimates, Soviet spending is underestimated in relation to the outlays required by the United States to match it. The unstated premise of this thesis is that only by emerging with the necessary price to the United States of imitating the estimated Soviet defense performance, no matter how steep this price, do we have a good measure of the threat of Soviet defense to the United States and of the resources that must be assigned to neutralize the threat.

Marshall has succeeded inadvertently in exposing a key fallacy of the traditional CIA methodology of dollar estimation: the CIA, through its spotty, inconsistently selective, and superficial system of dollar discounts, has created a meaningless kaleidoscope of real and unreal costs in producing its picture of Soviet defense spending. It manages neither to portray the real total cost of defense to the Soviets in dollars, nor to pinpoint the actual price that the United States would have to pay to repeat the presumptive Soviet effort. It overestimates the former and underestimates the latter, assuming constancy of standard American inputs.

Marshall's intricate and painstaking rationale, whatever his own policy views, has been used simplistically in the past year and a half by advocates of high defense spending to make the abstract cost of duplicating Soviet defense the test of national security. The Soviet defense package, as measured, appraised and inflated by the estimators, is a sort of free-floating platonic model, as though the differing environments of the two powers are mere accidents of logic rather than the essence of different security needs. A whole armory of questions, more pertinent to budgeting, lie begged or ignored. These concern the nature of reasonably probable Soviet intentions, the likely need and use of various defense components in contingent interactions between the two countries, the quality and purpose of analogous components on both sides, the output weights of the Soviets' other opponents added to the United States end of the military balance, political needs and constraints related to defense spending, the possibility of economizing by substituting cheaper defense inputs and outputs even in the American context, and recourse to mutual disarmament. Such difficult questions cannot begin to be answered by impulsively duplicating or exceeding uncertain Soviet numbers and their hypothetical aggregated value. □

GIVING UP ON THE PROBLEM

LIFE ON THE JOB

BILL SMOOT

Only a few years ago quality of work was a national issue, with dozens of articles on the "blue-collar blues" and the "white-collar woes," with Congressional hearings and government reports and special conferences on job enrichment. In 1972 HEW Secretary Elliot Richardson warned that we had become "perilously estranged" from the effect of unfulfilling work on the quality of our lives; he was encouraged by the renewed interest and confident that the problem would be conquered. That same year Sen. Edward Kennedy introduced into Congress the Worker Alienation Research and Technical Assistance Act, declaring, "The issue of job discontent—its cost, its character, its implications, and its solutions—will not fade away or be brushed aside."

But the problem was not conquered, and whether it faded away or was brushed aside, it is no longer part of the kind of public discourse that stimulates people and institutions to take action. We are once again "perilously estranged" from the issue of boring, meaningless, unfulfilling work.

The recession that began in late 1974 no doubt contributed to the disappearance of the issue. With more than 7 million Americans jobless, attention naturally turns to creating more jobs, not better ones. But quality of work was already fading on its own; and the deeper reason for its demise is that it came to be seen as a *problem without a solution*. Where commentators had once drawn attention to the tragedy of lives wasted in unfulfilling work, they now chorused a sentiment most succinctly expressed in the title of a book by Sar Levitan and William Johnston, *Work Is Here to Stay, Alas*.

The rise and fall of the work issue is a story worth telling for three reasons: first, to show that concern for the quality of work was not a fad but rooted in a deep contradiction between the evolving character of the American people and the work situation to which they give the greater, if hardly the better, part of their lives; second, to detail how business, government and labor failed to respond adequately to a fundamental problem we face as a people, and finally, to suggest that this failure reflects the narrowness of the area of discourse in which the country confronts its serious social problems.

Quality of work, which ignited as an issue in the early 1970s, had begun to smolder in the student protest movement of the 1960s. In 1962 the Port Huron Statement,

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founding document of Students for a Democratic Society, declared that: "work should involve incentives worthier than money or survival. It should be educative, not stultifying; creative, not mechanical; self-directed, not manipulated; encouraging independence, a respect for others, a sense of dignity, and a willingness to accept social responsibility. . . ." And in 1964 Mario Savio, a leader of the Free Speech Movement at Berkeley, captured the frustration of students when he said: "The 'futures' and 'careers' for which American students now prepare are for the most part intellectual and moral wastelands."

It was largely in search of alternatives to these wastelands that the youth movement set out in the various directions now remembered as the "life styles" of the counterculture. The more socially and politically committed young sought work in social programs such as Vista and Job Corps, service professions such as teaching and counseling, or full-time political work. Some rejected the notion of work entirely, became "hippies" or "street people" and survived by panhandling, drawing welfare, peddling dope, or by remaining financially dependent on their parents. Others looked to alternative work in arts and crafts or "returned to the land" as small farmers. And a number remained in perpetual crisis about what to do, taking jobs they regarded as temporary until they could "get it together," i.e., find something meaningful to do. These "life styles" were at their core "work styles," and the young people's revolt against the lives that lay before them was more than anything else a revolt against the jobs that lay before them.

But why did this particular generation rebel against work? The answer lies in two social phenomena that were evolving at cross-purposes with each other: increased affluence and the changes it brings about in people, and the growing proletarianization of education and jobs.

The generation that revolted against work was the first to come of age in an era undisciplined by depression or World War. Because real wages (wages adjusted for inflation) have tripled since 1935 and doubled since 1945, growing up was a very different experience in the 1950s and 1960s from what it had been in the 1920s and 1930s. Having never experienced scarcity or hard times, the young began, in the words of their elders, to "take things for granted." Their parents' goals of financial gain and material security no longer seemed worth the sacrifice of boring work. The young had a new American dream: that work should be a self-realizing experience of personal and social value.

The nature of work was also changing—but in the opposite direction. As the new generation was developing a greater hunger for fulfilling work, the institutions in which work is performed were becoming less "human." Led by the postwar expansion of the modern corporation, these institutions were becoming more bureaucratic and hierarchical. Work assignments were becoming narrower and narrower in an ever increasing division of labor. The fragmented and authoritarian conditions normally associated with working-class jobs began to pervade middle-class work as well, and the assembly line became an apt metaphor for many jobs far removed from the factory.

So a new generation entering the work force wanted jobs to be more stimulating, while the new jobs required that workers be more "tractable." Far from being a passing fad, the revolt against work had its roots in this deep contradiction between jobs that demanded people to be more like robots, and workers who wanted to be more creative and free.

Despite the depth of the work rebellion, the student movement never succeeded in converting the problem of the quality of work into a public issue. Unlike causes such as the war in Vietnam, quality of work was an issue so profound and encompassing that it did not lend itself to the highly charged activism that characterized the 1960s. It was the blue-collar counterpart of the student movement that forced society to look more seriously at the work issue.

"It happened in the schools; it's happening in the Army —why the hell did they ever think it wouldn't happen in the factories!"

"What happened" in the factories, in the words of Louie Streho, a Detroit official in the seaman's union, was the rebellion of young workers that began to plague industry in the late 1960s. By 1969 the quit rate had nearly doubled nationally from what it had been at the start of the decade. Absenteeism and tardiness were up; at a Chevrolet assembly plant in Baltimore the absentee rate soared from 3 percent in 1966 to 7.5 in 1970. Discipline became a problem. As Ed Sadlowski, then a local official in the Steelworkers union, put it: "In 1965 —get this!—only a few hundred disciplines were issued to guys in the Southworks. Guess how many the company gave out last year? . . . That's right, 3,400 disciplines in 1970—for coming late, for not coming at all, for swearing, arguing, drinking . . . the company guys are moaning." With a statement like that the work issue was raised in a way that could not be ignored.

Whatever one thought of this development, on one point there was complete agreement: the source of the new problem was the younger workers. An official at G.M. reported that "only 15 percent of the workforce at G.M. generates most of the late arrivals and absences. . . . Most of these men are concentrated among the newer workers under thirty-five." And Douglas Fraser, then UAW vice president, admitted that "the young workers won't accept the same kind of discipline their fathers did."

The changes in the postwar generation which had led to protest on the campus were causing a similar revolt on the shop floor. Undisciplined by the depression, the younger workers had a more active desire for personal freedom, were less willing to accept authority, and were better educated than their elders. Their attitudes most often showed up in revulsion against the more menial and boring jobs typified by the assembly line. Such jobs are only a fraction of the blue-collar employment, but they are so central to industrial production and to the economy that the nation could no longer ignore the revolt—and the quality-of-work issue that lay beneath it.

First, in the business press and then spreading out to the rest of the print media, the problem was finally receiving its due attention. In March 1972, the angry, youthful (average age: 29) workers at the Vega assembly plant in Lordstown, Ohio went on strike to protest the speed

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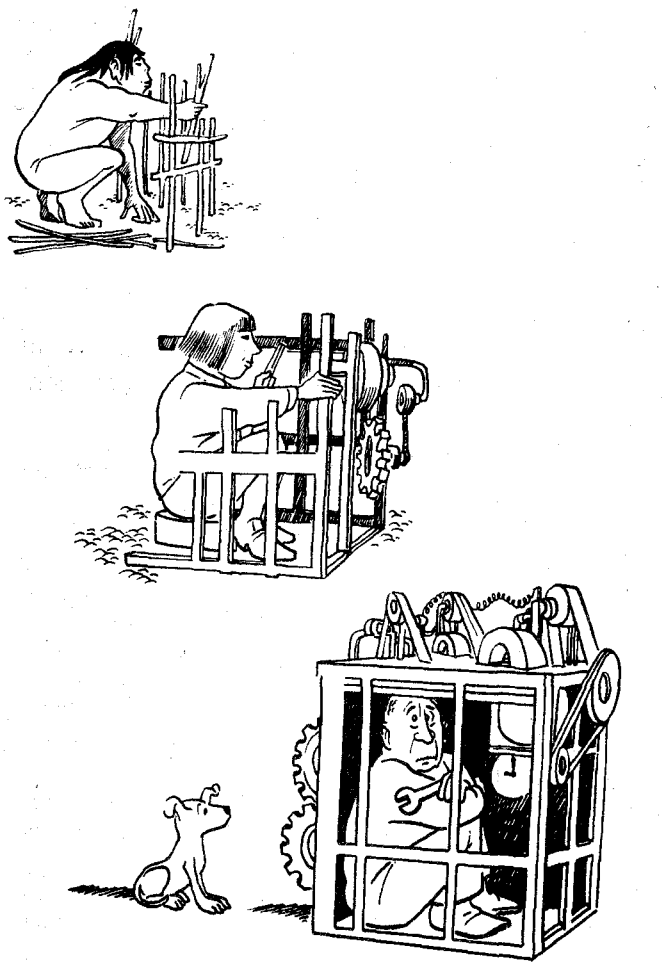
of the assembly line in particular and the deadening nature of their work in general. [See "The Men Won't Toe the Vega Line" by B.J. Widick, *The Nation*, March 27, 1972.] Their action seemed to capture the essence of the work issue and the media exploded with images of blue-collar longhairs mobilizing themselves against the assembly line. More than 140 articles and books were written about Lordstown; it took on the significance of a blue-collar Woodstock. Quality of work had at last become a national issue.

In the business community the problem created an acute sense of urgency. Absenteeism, high turnover and sabotage are expensive maladies. They were even more critical in the context of the early 1970s: slumping corporate profits, falling productivity, the first balance of trade deficit in the 20th century (1971), and the dollar crisis. The last thing business wanted was worker unrest.

Part of the business community responded to the issue by looking to "job enrichment" as a way to make work more satisfying and thus quiet the rebellion. A "humanistic" alternative to Taylorism, job enrichment aims to de-emphasize discipline and to make relations between workers and their supervisors less authoritarian. In some cases work is redesigned to vary the tasks and to permit greater worker responsibility. By 1974 more than 2,000 firms were involved in such experiments. Reports of their success appeared in the business press, and there were high hopes for the ability of job enrichment to increase productivity and alleviate personnel problems.



Vadillo, el Sol de Mexico

But the job-enrichment boom soon knocked up against the inherent limits to its growth. As many of its advocates admit, it rubs against the grain of American managerial philosophy, and the deeper and more substantial the democratizing aims of job enrichment, the more this "going against the grain" becomes an outright contradiction. But the locus of this tension is something deeper than managerial *attitude*; it is the political issue of who is to control the work process—management or the workers.

Today one hears a great deal about the passivity of the masses and the integration of workers into the system. But if sociologists have memories short enough (and perceptions shallow enough) to believe that, the captains of industry do not. Much of American industrial history involves the struggle of management for maximum control over the worker—getting the worker to do what management wants, the way it wants it done, for the wage it wants to pay. And while the managers have had to give some ground—usually on wages—the victory in the greater war has been theirs.

Against the background of this struggle, it is easy to see why management balks at reforms that increase the worker's power, even in the smallest increments. Edwin Mills, former director of the U.S. Productivity Commission's Quality of Work Program, stated that democratization of the work-place could "open a Pandora's box from which there's no return. Pretty soon you'll have the workers managing the managers. It's a first step toward encroaching on management's prerogative of controlling and directing the means of production."

So the majority of the business world shied away from job enrichment and rode out the crisis using managerial techniques that had proven more or less successful over the years: authoritarian control of workers, material incentives and personnel gimmicks to ease the tensions. One G.M. plant gave out trading stamps as a reward for regular attendance; Ford tried a dose of realism by showing prospective auto workers a film depicting the grimness of assembly-line work.

Certain minority voices notwithstanding, for business the work issue was a productivity issue; its concern was more to manage the symptoms than to eradicate the disease. The logic of business, which reduces everything to dollars and cents, could not acknowledge the work issue for what it humanly was—the problem of people spending their lives in unfulfilling and meaningless work.

The government response was marked by a tension between two approaches to worker dissatisfaction. Some in HEW and the Congress saw the issue as a serious problem affecting the lives of millions of Americans, but most were impressed by the difficulties it caused the corporations, difficulties made especially critical by the country's declining position in the world economy.

In December 1972, HEW Secretary Elliot Richardson released *Work in America*, a government-commissioned report which concluded that: (*1*) millions of Americans in white-collar as well as blue-collar jobs are understandably dissatisfied with their work; and (*2*) work has profound and far-reaching effects upon many other aspects

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of life, and human well-being generally. The report placed much of the blame for worker dissatisfaction on authoritarian managerial techniques. It uncritically endorsed work redesign, or "humanization," as the alternative to Taylorism and the solution to worker alienation. The report did not, however, acknowledge the historical worker-management struggle over control of the labor process, nor did it address the subversive potential of democratizing the work-place. It did argue at great length the productivity and profit of work humanization. The argument was apparently not successful. First heralded by the press as a report that would have great influence on public policy, *Work in America* received a cool reception from business leaders and policy makers. Its first hurrah was, unfortunately, its last.

While the report was being written, Senator Kennedy introduced into Congress his bill affirming the profound importance of the problem of "worker alienation" and setting aside funds for research into the problem and for development of work humanization experiments. The bill shared with *Work in America* a liberal humanistic perspective; it also shared its fate: the bill died in committee in the fall of 1972.

Subsequent Congressional action extended the scope of the U.S. Productivity Commission to cover the quality of work. By 1975 the commission had been permanently established as the Center for Productivity and the Quality of Working Life. But by then the work issue had been reconceived. Concern for boring, unfulfilling work and its effects on human beings had been replaced by worry about productivity and profit. As John Dunlop, then director of the Commission on Productivity and Work Quality, said during House hearings in 1973: "I would say that the term 'quality of work' could be substituted for a number of terms . . . in some places we talk about productivity. Some places we have talked about morale, about reducing absenteeism, of turnover, of ways in which labor and management working together can cut down costs, and improve efficiency. . . ." At the end of five years of government attention to the subject the quality-of-work issue—and with it the valuable HEW research—had been liquidated into a productivity issue.

As the primary institutional representative of workers, organized labor might have been expected to champion the cause of the quality of work. Instead, its response was largely negative and defensive. In general, the mainstream of organized labor denied that there *was* a quality-of-work problem and, in the face of a rising youth revolt against work, clutched at any number of arguments—some of them mutually inconsistent—to make its point.

Unmoved by evidence of misery and frustration at the work-place, *The American Federationist*, official journal of the AFL-CIO, reprinted an article from *The Wall Street Journal* which said, in effect, that most workers have no right to expect satisfaction from their work. The article, by Irving Kristol, concluded that "it is utopian to expect ordinary working people to be as content with their jobs as the most successful surgeon or lawyer." In another *Federationist* article, a high labor official quoted a Gallup poll on job satisfaction to support his contention that workers are not really dissatisfied. These examples typify official labor's consistent inconsistency on the subject: On the one hand, it is unrealistic to expect "ordinary workers" to like their work, but on the other hand most *do* like their work.

Labor's knee-jerk defensiveness on the issue was not mere callousness; it reflected an institutional inability to deal with the problem. Organized labor was thus forced to beat back the issue in order to protect itself as an institution. Union leaders, seeing that quality of work was an issue not amenable to collective bargaining, either denied the existence of worker dissatisfaction, or discovered its sources in problems of the sort that commonly figure in grievance procedures. For example, William Gomberg, writing in the *Federationist*, defended the unions by pointing out that their grievance procedure routinely handles such problems as having the right equipment for the job, having enough information to do the job, and receiving fair consideration for promotion.

The union most responsive to the quality-of-work issue was the United Auto Workers, representing the industry most plagued by dissatisfaction. The UAW enthusiastically supported Senator Kennedy's bill in 1972 and joined with management to form the National UAW-G.M. Committee to Improve the Quality of Worklife. But the UAW's greater openness to the issue made its inability to deal with it only the more evident. Before it raised quality of work as an issue in collective bargaining, UAW President Leonard Woodcock said, "the union should have some idea what the solution is. We don't."

In their responses to the quality of work, business, government and labor all seemed to sense—if only by a vague and uneasy intuition—that it was a subversive issue. Their suspicions were correct. The work issue is radical in that it points to the *roots* of our socioeconomic system: who should control the work process, and to what ends?

But the discourse on the quality of work avoided these deep, systemic questions. As a result, that discourse not only failed to discover solutions to the problem but failed to keep quality of work alive as an issue. What began as a concern for people burdened with boring, unfulfilling work ended with a loaded question: given the present socioeconomic system, what can be done? The majority voices of our institutions answered that, alas, nothing could be done. That this answer might suggest that the socioeconomic system itself was the cause of the problem was never acknowledged.

So a universe of discourse that takes the present system for granted and excludes all thought of an alternative—that is, a socialist—system has shown itself bankrupt in the face of the problem. This does not in itself constitute a proof that capitalism is no longer able to solve its own problems, but it does mandate that voices which propose alternatives to the capitalist arrangement of the work world be admitted into the public debate. As work and other human problems are made subservient to the goal of protecting the capitalist system from critical analyses, the legitimacy of that system becomes more specious. Something more than an issue has died when the best institutional resources of a society, after being fully mobilized around a problem, can only conclude with a shrug and an "alas." □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

The Little Magazine: Grow or Die

GENE LYONS

About three months ago I was asked to give a talk before the annual convention of the Associated Writing Programs, a group made up of creative writing teachers from colleges and universities across the country and the largest of its kind. The invitation came as a direct result of an article I had written for *Harper's* in which I had said some hard things against that amorphous, smothering academic entity, the English Department. The general thrust of that piece had been that our professional *littérateurs* in the academy had by and large metamorphosed into bureaucrats so preoccupied with their own prerogatives and self-replication that they were failing miserably at their three fundamental tasks: training students to be literate, preparing teachers, and seeing to the health of contemporary literary culture. Despite the fact that the majority of the fiction writers and poets who inhabit the academic world are only tenuously accepted there, and most of the ones I have known agreed with me either wholly or in part, I was expected to be a controversial speaker. I was in fact asked by the person responsible for inviting me to see if I could not enliven the proceedings by starting a fight among the members.

Now setting a convention of poets and fiction writers to feuding is about as difficult as arranging a pecking party in a henhouse: the hard thing is to get some light to penetrate the dust and feathers. As it has been my experience that most professional organizations with altruistic overtones prefer to keep the hortatory and the uplifting at a distance from the self-interested and the pecuniary, I decided that the proper place to generate controversy was at their juncture. I talked, in rough order, about jobs, money, students and the literary culture in part spawned and nourished by creative writing teachers and their spiritual kin in the world outside the academy. My animadversions on the first three topics are of only passing interest to a general audience: what was, if anything, controversial about my remarks was my insistence that there exists an organic, if not a causal, relationship between a somewhat dishonest and benignly cynical attitude toward the academic world held by many writers and the somewhat dishonest and not so benign attitudes I had been encountering in so many of the "little magazines" and presses I had been reading in order to generate this column.

I said that it seemed to me both obvious and inevitable that an organization like the Associated Writing Programs would strive to become for creative writing teachers what the Modern Language Association or the American Historical Association are to their respective fields: job and prestige markets, the buddy system writ large and foundation-supported—the determiners of professional tone, style and prerogatives. You hire my protégé and I'll publish your poems. I read at your school's arts festival—you serve on the staff of my place's summer writer's conference. The Way of the World. And why after all should writers and teachers of writing not have as much contact as wallpaper manufacturers and merchants of deodorants? Not to mention specialists in 17th-Century English non-Dramatic Literature?

What troubled me more, I said, since the waste and boondoggling in the academic world is so universal that only a genuine Puritan could continue to imagine the primary purpose of our schools to be education, was the Everyman an Artist But No Man Needs to Read syndrome encouraged by large and promiscuous enrollment in creative writing. Of course creative writing courses do not necessarily intend to turn everyone who takes one into an artist of the beautiful; by giving students experience in just how difficult, agonizing and joyously rare a commodity real creativity is, teachers hope to turn them into lovers of books. My experience, sadly, had been that the transfer was not being made. Apart from those blessed few who learned to read with the eager voracity of persons anxious to learn from, imitate and transcend their elders, most creative writing students I had observed spent too much time in far too close a community with their own presumed genius—as, I feared, did too many of their teachers. (I ought to add at this point that I cling to the old-fashioned notion that writing good fiction and poetry is a vastly more difficult and demanding thing than writing essays, articles and reviews, and that my own talents of invention and literary creation are nonexistent.)

The institutionalization of creative writing as a permanent, degree-granting part of the academy has brought with it a permanent faculty. Many of that faculty, as the MFA degree is now accepted as "terminal" for hiring and promotion purposes, are hothouse flowers like much of the rest of the faculty, i.e., persons who entered school in September of their 5th year and have never left it. Creative writing then becomes a "specialty" like many another. Rather than writing for altruism, recognition and money like ordinary egomaniacs, academic writers and their spiritual kin write for grant- and tenure-bestowing committees. Welcome to the world of the "little magazine."

The discerning reader will have recognized much of the above, particularly the preceeding paragraph, as overly programmatic and tending in the direction of satire. Very well then, qualify it as you may. But before discounting entirely my assertion that there is a connection between the care and feeding of authors in the United States and the tone of petulance and animosity to be found in a great number of "little magazines," have a look at an essay in the Spring 1977 issue of *North American Review* by Stephen Minot called "Hey, Is Anyone Listening?" (Have a look, in fact, at the magazine as a whole, a well-edited, attractively printed and unfailingly *interesting* publication sold on many newsstands and in good bookstores.) Minot opens with some uncomfortable truths: he has never met a student or a colleague in a considerable academic career who has *ever* subscribed to or read a small magazine publishing fiction and poetry; in eighteen years of publishing in such magazines, every one of which is taken by his school's library and displayed in the periodical room, no one has *ever* volunteered to having read a single thing he has written; there is not a single newsstand or bookstore in his home city of Hartford which will sell a single literary quarterly on a regular basis.

He offers sobering statistics: a magazine called *Field: Contemporary Poetry*

Gene Lyons contributes a monthly column to The Nation.

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and Poetics got in 1975 10,500 poems submitted to it by 1,875 writers. *Field* has 520 subscribers. As Minot notes that's better than 3 to 1 poets over poetry readers. Nor is that a freak. I have myself been present at a "writer's conference" and seen George Garrett wring a mass confession from a couple of hundred "poets" that *nobody in the room had purchased a single hardback volume of poems by one author for anything other than classroom use in a calendar year.* For those who would blame magazine and book publishers for neglecting the arts Minot offers the confession that neither he nor anybody he knows subscribes to more than one literary magazine, if indeed they subscribe to any at all. And these are writers! That, I submit to you, is news, and tells more about the state of the little magazine and small press in this country than all of my own meanderings in and around the subject in this space for the last several months.

Minot tells of visiting a book fair in Cambridge, Mass., and found that with several exceptions (among them *Ploughshares, Fiction International, Massachusetts Review* and *North American Review*, all of which impress me as excellent exceptions) "the great bulk of magazines there were so minor as to have no real following, no real public need for existing. Most were the private hobbies of their editors. Not one published work which cried out for national distribution. Yet most of these editors expected public aid in the form of grants. And some were very impatient."

Rather than summarize Minot's ideas about what ought to be done to remedy this situation, I shall further urge you to get hold of a copy of the article. In general he proposes that the foundations and specifically the National Endowment for the Arts stop supporting marginal and perennially moribund publications. Grow or die, he says to editors and publishers. There are too many of you for many of us to take you at all seriously.

Minot is in his strictures, I think, essentially correct. The habit that so many editor-hobbyists have fallen into of depending upon foundation support in order to survive has had at least three deleterious effects: to begin with they have grown paradoxically thin and lazy, as if public funding were a kind of digestible tapeworm capable of maintaining its host perpetually in a semi-moribund state. Minot records his own difficulties in trying to use little magazines in the classroom. One could not be bothered to box and send fifteen copies; another demanded prepayment after not replying to Minot's letter for a month, as if, he says, "the college would skip the country to save $18." Secondly, famished prosperity encourages self-fulfilling prophecies about the assumed Philistinism of the audience. Traces of that attitude penetrate even Minot's argument, as when he observes that creative writing programs are "turning out more and more skilled literary craftsmen and craftswomen—an ever expanding tribe of basket weavers in a nation which at present prefers plastic." As he has earlier established that even writers themselves do not consume the magazines in which they publish, the equation of "creative writing" and "basket weaving" strikes me as doubly unfortunate, particularly since basket weaving is the sad equivalent of far too many courses and programs.

It is one thing to argue that Reggie Jackson is overrated and overpaid, another to claim that the world's best right fielder plays for Corpus Christi in the Gulf Coast League, or that the man with the best curve ball operates out of the bullpen for the Amarillo Gold Sox. I do not mean to argue by that analogy that the creation of literature is a competitive activity, nor have I forgotten that Johnny Bench's eventual successor may at the moment be playing high school ball in Hurricane, Utah. But perhaps at the expense of seeming a bit prescriptive, it seems to me that the third harmful effect of depending upon foundation support for an editor, or for that matter for a writer, is a further weakening of the idea of writing as a public act, with a consequent advance in privatism and willful self-indulgence, or simple incomprehensibility, as manifested in the works of the Fiction Collective, recently discussed here. There is a large audience out there for seriously intended work and Minot is, in general, correct in saying that many editors, publishers and even writers are not energetic enough in their attempts to entice it. On this score the activities of the Fiction Collective might very well be emulated and improved upon.

Having said all of this I should add that even those of us who profess to value serious writing are often astonishingly lazy in our way of going about it. Not to mention cheap. Just this weekend I personally blew $20 in four hours of pizza, beer, a baby sitter and the movie *The Deep*, an outlay made even more indulgent by the fact that I had read the novel for review and knew how the plot, which besides the eyeball massage was all the film had to offer, would end. That $20 would have purchased one-year subscriptions to not only *North American Review* but to *Ploughshares* and the *Virginia Quarterly Review* as well, any one of which would have provided infinitely more pleasure and enlightenment even than a 30-foot-high moving image of Jacqueline Bisset in a wet T-shirt. But then almost everybody I know spends more on liquor and/or cigarettes than they do on books. So right now, while you're thinking about it, why not grab your checkbook and subscribe to your favorite little magazine, or better still, to two. If you haven't a favorite, any of those mentioned above would be good for starters. Of course most people wouldn't do that once in ten years, but if they would, it could make quite a difference.

Oh yes, there was a fight at the convention of creative writers, and it was a good one. Many of the writer-teachers present did not agree with me at all, although more than I had imagined did, and a grand time was had arguing about it.

But that is enough of the vice and folly side of things for a while. Next outing I plan to take the high road by examining quality work from what may seem like unlikely places to some readers: a collection of fiction from *Redbook Magazine*, and a beautifully done limited edition of a translation of a novel, *Ourika*, called the first fictional attempt of a white writer to enter a black mind by translator John Fowles, and published in Austin, Texas. □

EVENTUALLY, YOU

come to a full stop.
This window full of other windows,
this room full of people
who pass daily through the light
and shadows of this view
began as a repetition
of enclosure.

All day the road flowed out of itself
pulling you past what might have been
good country. The lawns, the lace
curtains, once a family seated
in a window rose and fell back
like rooms remembered by children.
At each stop your legs unbent slowly.

This morning you woke
in the woods where you hid
for years. The nights drew light
from the house you lived in.
You visited each neighbor
once, planning a history
of a reunion.

Leslie Ullman

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A Miner's Year in the Dark

THE LONG TUNNEL: A Coal Miner's Journal. *By Meade Arble. Atheneum Publishers. 239 pp. $8.95.*

DUANE LOCKARD

The Carter administration's proposal to double the production of coal to meet the energy crisis has evoked little comment on what that will mean for the lives of those who mine coal, particularly those who work in underground mines. Environmentalists are anxious about the consequences of extensive strip mining in the upper plains states where reclamation of land may be impossible owing to low annual rainfall. Scientists warn us about the accumulation of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere from the ever increasing combustion of coal. But almost nothing has been heard about the cost in lives, chronic illness, and maiming that will be the inevitable byproduct of more subsurface mining. This is not so unusual; it has become commonplace to ignore the condition of mine workers. For example, it is a common but faulty assumption that the passage and enforcement of the Coal Mine Safety Act of 1969 resolved the problem of mine safety. Far from it. Although indifferently enforced in the first years after its enactment, the law has contributed at least something to the improvement of mine safety records. Nevertheless the reduction in fatalities in American mines still leaves our miners three times as likely to die from accidents as their counterparts in Britain, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. (A measure of the impact of the 1969 law is the fact that during the 1960s American mine fatality rates were *five* times those in Britain.) Coal mining remains the most dangerous of all occupations in the United States; miners are four times as likely to suffer severe injury at work than the average industrial worker.

Anyone who believes the 1969 Act answered the problems of mine safety should read *The Long Tunnel*, a miner's journal written during 1974 and 1975. As is usual with books on coal mining, this potent little book has had few reviews, and no member of Congress has seen fit to read any of it into the *Congressional Record*.

Arble became a miner because he found himself in the sort of situation from which miners are usually recruited: desperation. He had two children and a third coming soon, no job and no prospects, and so he returned to his Pennsylvania home town and got a job in a nearby mine. Fortunately he kept a journal of his year as a miner, and it makes one of the best commentaries on coal mining ever published. In it we find out how profits are maximized by cutting corners on safety, by neglecting to train new miners, by using up miners and discarding them. Arble himself had no underground training before he went inside for his first work shift. Luckily he was not among the vast number of first-year miners who suffer serious accidents. A graph showing the incidence of accidents by the number of years of experience as a miner is a sharply declining diagonal line with the incidence of accidents falling rapidly as miners learn how to avoid danger. (Some of that may also be attributable to the attitude the late James Jones observed among combat infantry: are you going to send your best friends on a particularly hazardous mission or some green, unknown newcomer?)

Arble is good at describing the work conditions, especially in mines where the coal seam is low and where flooding with icy water is common:

> To shovel the coal away from the strainer, I had to immerse my arms to the shoulder in the cold, fetid water. I would take three shovelfuls, then clap my hands and beat my arms to restore circulation. The water ran down the inside of the waders and in no time I was soaked. It was a long, cold shift.

Not only is the work obnoxious but danger lurks everywhere: roof cave-ins, electrocution, falling machinery, explosions, and slow death from inhaling coal dust. And to these grave dangers one must add the lesser wounds such as cuts, scrapes, bruises and fractures which are matters of daily experience. Coal, when it breaks the skin, tends to leave marks like tattoos; the backs of some miners look like a surface on which a tattoo artist had aimlessly doodled for hours.

The indifference to the miners' welfare is nicely illustrated by Arble's account of his second shift inside the mine. He was detailed to a crew using a continuous miner and given the job of keeping the power cables leading to the continuous miner (with no less than 12,000 volts of electricity) free of the lumbering 33-foot mining machine and the 25-foot shuttle buggy that takes coal from the mining machine to a belt for transmission out of the mine. If either of these machines were to run over the cables an explosion would be almost inevitable:

> I was supposed to grab the cable and haul it backward as fast as the miner chased it, meanwhile listening for the whine of the buggy so I didn't get run over, trying not to trip over bags of rock dust and props. All of this in a space [roof height] that varied between a yard and forty-eight inches high. My back was striped with long gashes. . . . For the last hours [of the shift] I stumbled around half blind. Sweat poured down my face. My knees were like hamburger from the coal inside the knee pads. My fingers were stiff and swollen from being caught between a couple of props. I couldn't feel the burning gashes down my back. My body had finally turned off the pain, and it took every ounce of will for me to drag the cables around. At the end I really didn't care if they exploded or not.

Most people, if they think about mine safety at all, would assume that mining is much safer today than it was thirty or forty years ago. It is true that the death and accident rates have declined, but that is not because mining has become safer. On the contrary the job has become more risky as a result of mechanization. The blinding dust, the noisy machinery, the high voltage electricity, and the dangers of the machines themselves and of the endless conveyer belts—all these are hazards that arose from or were exaggerated by automation of production. The dust, besides causing black lung, creates dangers because it prevents miners from seeing more than a few feet beyond their lamps. The machinery's noise obscures the sounds that old-time miners depended upon to warn that the top might be "working," i.e., about to fall. The high voltage power is now a continual threat instead of an occasional one as in the past. And the cumbersome machines have to operate within close tolerances to avoid knocking out posts that are holding up the top. The high rate of productivity of course reduces the death rate per thousands of tons mined, but when one looks at the rate per man year of work the improvement is much less dramatic.

Miners can retire at age 55, but the kind of life a miner lives underground—assuming he survives to retirement age—tends to make retirement brief. One of Arble's buddies (anyone you work with in a mine is a buddy even if you hate him) was a 54-year-old man struggling to make it through his last year. "He

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Duane Lockard has worked as a coal miner, and at present teaches politics at Princeton University.

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doesn't look like he'll make it," says Arble:

> His eyes are slits in a puffed, sagging, toothless face. His shoulders slope to a pear-shaped paunch. In a voice that wheezes with black lung, he mumbles about the arthritis in his knees that prevents him from walking at all in the low. He crawls, and in the circle of my lamp behind him, his haunches shift like an old elephant's. He stops twice between cross-cuts, one hundred feet apart, to catch his breath.

Says another buddy:

> I'm making double payments on the house so the woman'll have a place. I'm fifty-one. I'll never see that pension.

Arble has a good ear for the lingo of miners, a keen perception of what mining can do to people—to the wives and children as much as to the miners themselves. He is a tough critic (not least of himself) and a sharp observer whose skill as a writer serves him well in conveying this stark picture of a miserable way of life that we appear to be ready to extend to more and more men and women. At the very least those who are making decisions about expanding underground mining should be aware of the implications of what they are deciding. But they probably will not be if the future of mining is to be anything like its past. □

DANCE

NANCY GOLDNER

Vienna Waltzes, George Balanchine's new ballet for the New York City Ballet, suggests a scenario about change: from prewar simplicity to postwar complexity, from country to city, flirtation to seduction, natural love to supernatural love, from wood to machine and woods to movie studio. The moving picture dance is where I think I hear the machine—an insistent tap-tap-tap with which the waltzers elongate mockingly the surging downbeat of the famous tune from *Der Rosenkavalier*. The machine item is pure fancy, but that *Vienna Waltzes* ends with Richard Strauss and begins with Johann Strauss II is surely indicative of heady concept. So is Rouben Ter-Arutunian's iconographic décor. His first set represents the gentle woods, dappled in front and thickly misted in the back. After the third dance the trees rise, their roots becoming a kind of Art Deco gate. Beardsley-like black drapery dabbed with red drops down to decorate the front of the stage. For the fifth and final dance, the stage is stripped to a vast silver ballroom, its dimensions made ambiguous by a mirrored back wall. The roots of the trees have become ciliated lighting fixtures.

This is the story of our time, and while it is tempting to view *Vienna Waltzes* through a socio-Darwinian scrim, Balanchine's ballet is actually shaped by his tried and true formula of the menu. The governing idea is variety and contrast. The challenge is not to chart cultural history in three-quarter time but to show that three-quarter time is interesting enough to sustain fifty minutes or so of dancing. More specifically: how does one make a satisfying meal out of sweets? For although Balanchine's ballets have always waltzed—in that they are lyrical, strongly rhythmical and, above all, civilized—J. Strauss-Franz Lehár-R. Strauss is a good deal more caloric than Tchaikovsky.

As a meal *Vienna Waltzes* does not quite satisfy, perhaps because of the way it ends. And not all of the courses are entirely tasty in themselves. But there are many wonderful things in it too—so many as to make one's reaction to the whole work perplexing. One wants to love this ballet because its subject matter, the waltz, is a personification of Balanchine. The utter gorgeousness of these waltzes is utterly superior to today's feeble modesty, and *Vienna Waltzes* sweeps by in utter conviction of that fact—it's more fun to be an aristocrat than a bourgeois. It makes all the dancers look beautiful and gives the company's eccentric principals their most flattering roles in a long time. Yet three viewings of *Vienna Waltzes* has not sent me flying to the store to buy waltz shoes.

After a rousing overture to J. Strauss's *Tales from the Vienna Woods*, the curtain opens in silence on a stage bare of people. We are given a moment to absorb place. To the strains of a zither, one couple strolls into the woods, their heads tilted toward each other in whispering reflection, and tilted, too, so as to look handsome. For all the intimacy of the zither and the couple's posture, the woods is a public place after all, the love-walk a study in the art of the promenade. And sure enough, the privacy of their entrance quickly yields to a glittering panorama of waltzing couples as the zither is forsaken for the full orchestra. The couples do "nothing" but waltz around trees that are spaced across the stage. The men's braided uniforms and women's full pink dresses, just grazing their ankles, suggest a classy school prom, but the formality of their groupings and the sweet lilt of their waltz step suggests a cotillion. One admires the ever changing patterns and the way Balanchine uses them to soften his strict adherence to the ballroom step. The waltz is indeed beautiful and indeed malleable. One notices that the difference between a waltz step characterized by a free swing into the first beat and one characterized by a pause after the second beat is quite literally the difference between daytime and nighttime romance. One also comes to feel that the zither interludes beginning and closing this section are in some way the ballet's most profound heartbeat. It transforms the Karin von Aroldingen-Sean Lavery partnership into a poignant *affaire*, in which her gently suppressed ardor suggests an older woman on the arm of a tenderly obliging youth. Will he come to her side after all the other men have come to the side of their ladies? Of course he does, but the few seconds when von Aroldingen stands alone, the confidence of her pose shaded by a sliver of vulnerability, embodies all the tension arising out of the waltz's metrical hesitations. In the waltz, one cannot know all is well until the third beat.

From the ballroom waltz Balanchine moves to ballet waltzing. The music is Strauss's *Voice of Spring*. Patricia McBride and an ensemble of eight girls wear tulle in autumnal colors; Helgi Tomasson wears tights and tunic. Their full-out classical dancing promises the richest development of waltz time, but in fact their breezy jumps and turns in arabesque turn out to be the thinnest material of the ballet. Balanchine's menu formula makes a classical section inevitable, but this is one case where inevitability is cranked out. Then again, Tomasson's flickering jumps around the trees are as blithe as anything Balanchine has ever done. A few seconds of enchanting choreography and performance cannot make a dance, and yet. . . .

The surprise of a droopy classical waltz comes back-to-back with the biggest surprise of all—that a ballet dominated by the grandeur and lushness of the Viennese ballroom should have as its centerpiece a bawdy polka (to Strauss's *Explosion Polka*) for dance-hall girls and lower-class dandies in coxcombs and striped suits. The beer hall invades the woods. Bobbing replaces gliding. Heads *had* nuzzled against shoulders. In this dance noses nuzzle against bellybuttons. Instead of pivoting the ladies around in circles, the boys crawl in between their ladies'

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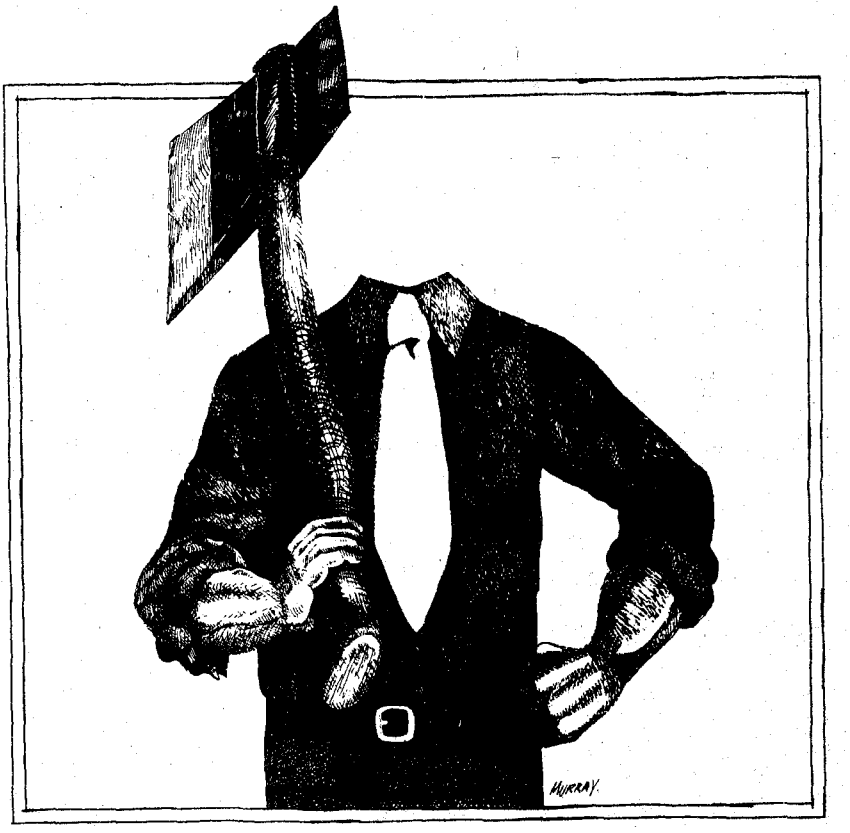

"Some budget slashers are missing the point."

"Budget cutting in state and local governments is politically popular. Unfortunately, it's not always financially smart.

Take New York for example. Without much thought, the state proposed to shut down 135 day care centers, serving 7,500 working families, in hopes of saving $20 million.

In fact, a Columbia School of Public Health study calculated that this 'saving' would have created $18.8 million in spending by other government agencies, both state and federal.

As the union representing state and local government workers, we see these kinds of blind budget decisions being made in every state, every day.

We know legitimate budget cuts are hard enough to live with. But false cuts are intolerable."

"The business of government is people."

—Jerry Wurf, President

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accommodating legs. Conceptually, it's the most original dance in the show, and it just might be the most perfect. It gives Sara Leland the most appealing role she's ever had.

The fourth section takes us into the mauve decade, Lehár's *Gold and Silver Waltz* accompanied by the already mentioned change in scenery. Now the waltz becomes ultra-suave. The women ease their way into the arms of their partners without so much as a bow. The invitation is understood by innuendo. The seduction of the lone man in red (Peter Martins) by the exquisite lone woman in black (Kay Mazzo) is also by innuendo. She extends her arm. He kisses her hand. They waltz. She leaves. He is left alone in the ballroom-boudoir. The Lehár is the torrid number and should probably be the ballet's atmospheric clincher. It's not yet oily enough, though. The girls don't handle their dresses by innuendo; they look before lifting their trains. Peter Martins seems more diffident than detached, therefore depriving a ravishing Mazzo of an equally potent foil. But these are transient objections. The thing just isn't settled in yet.

Perhaps the final section, to a medley of Richard Strauss waltzes from *Der Rosenkavalier*, is not yet settled in either. Or maybe the choreography for the concluding waltz simply isn't right. The beginning of the section, however, has just that voluptuousness toward which the whole ballet has been veering. Across the wide silver plains of the ballroom glide couples in svelte white gowns and black tuxedos. They seem like architectural models imposed on a tundra. From the shadows emerges The Girl in White. She floats to the center of the stage, and though her back is turned to us, the magnitude of her presence coalesces the vista's flatness into a round diamond. She lifts one arm, bows and rises, embraces the air, and waltzes free-form. Her dance is not on a beat; it is not off the beat. It's pure motion—gliding, swaying, breathing. Her arms lazily twine in the air and fall back across her throat in unearthly caresses. A gentleman joins her for a few turns. She lifts her dress across her face while waltzing in his arms, but such gestures toward privacy—indeed, any acknowledgment of a second person's existence—are superfluous. This phantom is dancing to her own tune. (And a good thing too, since her partner, on loan from the Bejart company, looks like a baboon in party clothes.) She is the waltzer of one's dreams. Naturally, she is played by Suzanne Farrell.

Her dance melts one's limbs into ice cream. I, for one, would have been delighted to slide out of the theatre at that point, but Balanchine uses her dream wander as an entry into the *final* final apotheosis. All the couples from the preceding sections, now dressed in white and black, swirl back, in mazes and vortexes. What place best represents the ultimate waltz: Farrell's extraterrestrial landscape or Hollywood? The latter could be as much a possibility as the former had Balanchine managed to keep the Hollywood vista continuously expanding and intensifying. Partly because of the stop-and-start nature of the music, and partly because the patterns are simply not that optically illusionary, the intended lollapalooza finale just isn't. No matter how meticulously prepared the meal, the final course has the final say.

Vienna Waltzes was part of a larger menu of Austrian composers, which opened with Mozart and continued with Webern before diving into the waltz kings. Surrounded by unlikely companions, the Webern *Episodes* garnered more wit than it already has. *Divertimento No. 15* re-entered the repertory for the occasion, having been absent for several seasons. To sum this masterpiece up, anything and everything one would want to say about Mozart's *divertimento* can be said about Balanchine's *divertimento*. Both casts were more or less sublime. One cast was led by Merrill Ashley, Maria Calegari, Susan Pilarre, Stephanie Saland, Marjorie Spohn, Tracy Bennett, Victor Castelli and Robert Weiss. The other was led by Suzanne Farrell, Ashley in another role, Calegari, Colleen Neary, Kyra Nichols, Sean Lavery, Gerard Ebitz and Peter Martins. All of these parts are for top-notch soloists (and so, in fact, are the parts for eight other ensemble girls). Some of the dancers are newcomers to the company. To sum it up, there is no better measure of the City Ballet's strength than the *Divertimento No. 15*s it danced this season. The one problem with the Austrian line-up was that the *Divertimento* caused some confusion as to which ballet was the big event. □

ARCHITECTURE / JANE HOLTZ KAY

America is haunted by ghoul architecture. The phantoms of today's built environment would chill the heart of a Lapp. And in support of that hyperbole, I commend to your attention the latest batch of prize winners honored by the American Institute of Architects. I have been gazing upon the photographs of the 1977 AIA awards and there is no way to describe the "top buildings" of the year but in ghostly terms: they are spooky, eerie, macabre.

What else can you call:

¶The stick outlines of Benjamin Franklin's house; bare-boned beams, framing, nothing else. No roof, no middle, no sides, only the ghosted dimensions of our founding father's home in Philadelphia.

¶The windowless façade of a bank, an eyeless stone skeleton, its neoclassical sockets blanked before the equally blank glass structure that high-rises behind it.

¶A grassy slope; yes, just plain grass, rolling shoulder high behind an asphalt parking lot.

These are three of the works honored by the architects in San Diego at a convention ominously called "Tomorrow," and they are typical of the lot. The seventeen winners, whether in portfolio or on the street, are so void of life, so mechanistically repetitive, so nonfaced, that they seem apparitions as much as architecture. To hand them the profession's highest praise, a witness must conclude, is an act close to masochism. Is it the death wish of a declining art?

There is, of course, another point of view.

The jurors in their awards report call such vanishing acts "modesty." Each building, you read there, solved a problem. Each aimed to conserve or preserve, the jury tells us. Lining up the shroud of Ben Franklin's bygone Philadelphia house was indeed a clever ploy by architect-thinkers Venturi and Rausch to show where the hero lived and yet leave the real excavations visible. The Penn Mutual's stone façade, also in Philadelphia, was kept in order to "tuck" a twenty-story structure behind it, saving the old original to mask the new one by Mitchell/Giurgola, last year's prize-winning firm. And the nothing-there hill hides a crater-shaped amphitheatre for 4,500 in Concord, Calif., where architects Frank O. Gehry and Associates removed the audience from the noise of the nearby highway.

You may stop shivering briefly to applaud such anti-exhibitionism: these designs, more than most, show environmental politeness. But just as their rationale slows you in your tracks, the

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John Hancock honor award comes before your eyes. A kamikaze act.

The John Hancock tower is the most spirited building of the decade. For three years, its rhomboid frame refused to hold its glass windows in the wind. The snap, crackle, pop became Boston's tallest joke. Cabbies called the Hancock structure "Plywood Ranch" because of the wooden replacements for the glass. The $10 million-plus fee to replace its 13.5 acres of window and buttress its frame would have tumbled some Latin American countries. (The mere act of *building* the showy Johns-Mansville headquarters in Denver helped to oust that management.) The Hancock's current excavation and construction suits may outlast the lives of the wealthy insurance company's executives. And, one hears, bugs still linger inside the shape. Architects, one might think, would do best to bury this embarrassment. Read on. Read on.

This was a difficult building to judge "because of the adverse publicity," the jury peers of I.M. Pei, the Hancock's architect, declare. Adverse *publicity*, say the worthy professionals. My elbow, says the careful reader. This was no adverse *publicity*—no concoction of the malign media. This mighty blowout was adverse *architecture* and to honor it as a "top building" again seems a myopic if not masochistic act.

"Carefully considered in its context, it is an elegant subtle shaft that mirrors such surrounding structures as Trinity Church and the Copley Plaza Hotel. The effect of the mass of the building at street level is not noticeable." So the prize givers describe this sixty-story, 790-foot structure in the heart of Boston.

There are other mirror buildings across America—from John Portman's reflectors in Atlanta, Detroit, etc., to those of Philip Johnson in Minneapolis and Houston. Many have had the effrontery to call their conspicuous towers "retiring," but few have had the nerve to insert them amidst architectural masterpieces like those in Boston's Copley Square and call them invisible.

"It is," the jurors conclude, "perhaps the most handsome reflective glass building." The phrase slides off the tongue. "History may show it to be the last great example of the species." Hmmm? Or does the tongue slide into cheek?

At best, you must call it spooky stuff to laud the "last great example" while that example lumbers off to some geological ash heap. But to praise it not just once but twice, seems even more suicidal: for the John Hancock is not the only mirror "species" to wear this year's AIA blue ribbon. Philip Johnson's twin-towered Pennzoil Place building in Houston shares an award. Undaunted by the fact that these may be the fading shades of an energy-indifferent, sealed-tight, street-shunning era, the architects give and receive their prizes.

Another such brontosaurus that shares their spotlight is not—and may not ever—even be inhabited. The Bronx Development Center, this season's most controversial building, gets an equally masochistic award from the architectural establishment. As surreal in origins and politics as in appearance, this center for the retarded has had problems far beyond its Buck Rogers air.

Aesthetics are superficial and time-bound. The fact that everyday viewers may perceive this building as something extruded from an aluminum plant tended by robots—the Brave New Ghoul look—is subjective, after all. One architecture critic has praised this work by Richard Meier as "a rhythmic fugue of fenestration, allied to a subtly expressive skin." Still, one would think that ongoing court fights over the building's use, hostility from the parents of would-be users, and a director who says "I think this center proves that long-range planning doesn't work" would at least silence the cheerleading of architect Meier's peers.

Perhaps there is simply no survival instinct left in the down-and-out profession of architecture. Lawyers, an expanding breed, fight off do-your-own probaters. Doctors, no slouches at survival, lobby against acupuncturists and midwives. Architects, however, huddle and shake ink-stained hands. Meanwhile the landscape we all live on suffers from the profiteers who operate without benefit of pen or pride. Should anybody be surprised by the look of the built environment? When the designers praise Silver Streaks heading full steam to oblivion, is it a wonder the developers give us asphalt-encased fake Victorian? The profit-mongering, the ill-sited, the woodsy-tacky may be closer to the popular urge for "more" than this ghoul architecture delivered from on high.

Not all the 1977 honor awards in San Diego went to such spooks, I hasten to add. The AIA gives recycling prizes—six "extended use" awards—that show how new architecture can spark old buildings: an Iowa abbey reshaped; a Boston wharf glamorized into mixed-income apartments; Chicago's Navy Pier lovingly restored, and Washington, D.C.'s Canal Square invigorated. Happily the AIA also stresses energy conservation; gives the nod to two public housing projects (one in Puerto Rico by Jorge del Rio/Eduardo Lopez and one in East Harlem by Horne Stageberg Partners), and cites a "not . . . inhumane" jail by Harry Weese and Associates in Chicago. Ironically, even here, an interior shot of Weese's jail shows more human beings than do all the other desolate views combined.

By custom, photos of architecture are deliberately lifeless, shadowed, made more sculptural, focused on forms. Every year, the prize portfolios emphasize haunted cubes, DiChirico landscapes, and photogenic chairs that resist the human bottom. This is not new. Eeriness may stem from the camera angle and the camera lies.

Nonetheless, 1977 fairly shivers off the page. I have been studying the winners every year for a decade now, and they have never seemed so forbidding. And those I have looked at firsthand are just as spooky on the street. The Mitchell/Giurgola office tower in Philadelphia rises from behind its "Egyptian Revival" front, forcing the walker into an icy time tunnel between the two. The John Hancock's very perfection of detail adds to its slick aloofness from the city street. (And what is one to say of the latest trend toward an underground architecture, as if the profession sought to bury its mistakes? Place Ville Marie bustles

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under Montreal; the city streets are gray.)

In this energy-aware, doom-mongering year, the juror architects—who include William Turnbull Jr., Lewis Davis and Henry V. Jova, among others—know better. Their report mouths the right aspirations; it is only that it applies them to the wrong buildings.

The prize givers understand, for instance, the need for cooperation in the built environment; they sense the lack of congregation in lonely acts of architecture. So what do they do? They *label* a lush vacation house "a mini-community." It would be comic if it were not tragic to accept a private pipe dream that insists that guests in a privately financed, private home create a "Maine fishing village."

"Architecture is now at a watershed, intellectually and functionally, and most practitioners have seemingly forgotten completely the Vitruvian concept of 'delight,'" the prize givers note. If they couldn't find more amiable architecture, then, why not shrink the whole show?

No, never. Architects follow orders. The jurors stayed "within the given ground rules," they say. Those rules, you can believe, are not set by you and me; nor, for that matter, by the poor architects practicing their hard-pressed art. The rules are set by the purse wielders: by the square inch to maximize commercial profit and the scrimped dollar barely to serve the public need. Banks, real estate interests, inhumane or harried bureaucrats set most of these rules. The designers just follow orders.

So, if a ghost architecture now hovers on their—and our—landscape, it becomes quite clear why. These specters rise, in part, from the mind-set and misguided talents of those who sell their skills to the highest bidder. Under the AIA's convention banner of "Tomorrow Is Today," such architects are getting their in-house awards this month. Yet as far as the eye can see, the bleak and haunted landscape they have worked together to create gives little cause to clap. □

THEATRE

HAROLD CLURMAN

London

The British National Theatre comprises three auditoriums. The largest, an open stage construction named the Olivier, accommodates 1,100 persons. It is said to have acoustic problems, but I noticed none in two visits there. It has a large revolving stage, operated by hand, and the stage area is of unusual height.

The Lyttelton auditorium has an adjustable proscenium stage and seats for 890. The small Cottesloe, which I didn't visit, is described as a simple rectangular box holding an audience of 400—studio space "where the company can develop actors, directors, new playwrights, difficult or little-known classics, new techniques."

The whole edifice is beautifully situated on the south bank of the Thames but the exterior is forbidding. Inside, a vast foyer contains a book stall, restaurants, snack and regular bars, room for modest exhibits and before-the-performance entertainment: Russian dancers and singers when I was there.

At the Lyttelton I saw *Bedroom Farce*, yet another piece by Alan Ayckbourn, the most prolific of English playwrights—a sort of Neil Simon, but with a lighter touch and a more satiric intention. He teases rather than torments the British middle class, and it laps him up.

Ayckbourn is particularly successful in depicting dumbbells in a much more kindly way than Noel Coward. In *Bedroom Farce* there are three couples, all of whose modes of bedroom behavior are supposedly significant of their existence in general: one of muddling foolishness, forever enduring and probably indestructible. The play is agreeably acted, with Susan Littler especially fetching as the best adjusted person of the lot.

The height of the Olivier and its stage equipment lend themselves to elaborate production. It is both an advantage—in that it tends to add a spectacular element to the pleasure of playgoing—and a detriment by giving a disproportionate amplitude to material that asks for intimacy. I could not determine whether *Tales from the Vienna Woods* profited more than it suffered from the sweep of its staging.

The play's plot hinges on the seduction of an honestly romantic but simple-minded lower-middle-class girl (her father runs a notions shop) by a gigolo type of youth whose sole talent is for

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success at gambling. She has an illegitimate child, is cut off by her father, abandoned by her lover and reduced to earning a miserable living by appearing nude in a nightclub. She ends by working for her father and marrying a gross young butcher in the next-door meat market.

A sob story on its surface, the play was first produced in Berlin in 1931; it reeks of the squalid Austro-German atmosphere just before the Nazi takeover, its irony and disgust heightened by the accompaniment of Strauss waltzes. Hence the title. Its author, Odön von Horváth, was killed in an accident at the age of 36 during his exile in Paris. Born in Fiume, his mother tongue was Hungarian, but after writing seventeen plays and three novels he had become one of the most important dramatists in the German language.

The tone of repugnance in *Tales from the Vienna Woods* is itself Germanic. As it begins, one is rather disoriented to hear it spoken in English by actors who, though excellent in themselves, seem strangely misplaced. But as the scenes progress one apprehends the play's social connotations.

The play was warmly received by the London press and the audience seemed responsive. This puzzled me at first but it then occurred to me that an analogy was found (not altogether consciously) between the recent German past and the English present, though there is a vast difference between the English and central European modes of "decadence." This might not have occurred to me had I not just seen another play, *Destiny*, of which more in a moment.

Robert Bolt's *State of Revolution* (also at the Olivier) is not at all a distinctive piece of writing. Reminiscent of certain quasi-documentary film histories, it sketches the personalities who engineered the Russian Revolution: Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin, together with such marginal figures as the troubled and indeterminate Gorky.

The approach is intelligent in its cool appraisal of the situation. Lenin is seen as a person of some decency (even sensibility) made rigid by a ruthless revolutionary logic; Trotsky as a brilliant mind barred from a thoroughly concrete realism by intellectual conceit; Stalin as an unfeeling instrument of revolutionary will. No conclusions are offered or aimed at. If the play does little more, it reiterates the age-old question of whether the so-called prime movers of history are the efficient cause or only the product of social events.

For all its neutrality the play held my attention because of its subject matter and the very fine performance by Michael Bryant, whose multifaceted Lenin is sympathetic without being made "nice." Terence Rigby (the stupid pug in Pinter's *The Homecoming*) presents Stalin as strikingly graphic and brutally menacing without histrionic villainy. All in all, the company of English men and women at the National was more believable as Russians than it was as Viennese.

Nothing at the Olivier is more elegantly and tastefully lavish than the production of Ben Jonson's *Volpone*, given, as it seldom is, unabridged. In this respect, I would say of Jonson what he said of Shakespeare: "whatsoever he penned, he never blotted out a line. My answer hath been, 'Would he had blotted a thousand.'" Still, *Volpone* remains the classic comedy of greed from his day down through Stefan Zweig and the Broadway farce, *Sly Fox*.

The new production takes on a shining grandeur through John Bury's "Renaissance" setting and eye-catching costumes. It is acted and directed with an assurance and dispatch which give it the air of being "definitive." The weakness of the production—I hesitate but feel compelled to say—is Paul Scofield's playing of the name part. He looks as magnificent as a "magnifico" should. But apart from this he has no other characterization, except when he very ably feigns "cough, phthisic, gout, apoplexy, palsy and catarrhs." There is very little insight into the essential "fox." What we get is a princely person with a superb voice. The play becomes a vocal concert.

John Gielgud is also in the cast in the subsidiary role of the egregious Britisher Sir Politic Would-Be. He is particularly cute in the role and the audience revels in him. The Mosca was rather too plain or "straight" for my taste; he softened the play's bite. I much preferred Tyrone Guthrie's production in Minneapolis.

We Americans often and justifiably complain that our actors' speech and voices are inadequate to the demands of the great plays of English literature. But when acting becomes too markedly a matter of elocutionary grace the effect is dramatically chilling. This was true of *Volpone* and also of Alan Howard in *Wild Oats*, a hitherto neglected farce by an Anglo-Irishman, John O'Keeffe (1747-1833) which is the hit of the Royal Shakespeare Company's season. Howard plays Rover, "a strolling gentleman," that is, an actor. He has good looks, energy, stage facility and—a Voice. The great Italian, Salvini, once said that the three most important things in acting were "voice, voice, voice." This is even less exact than saying that what counts in literature is words, words, words. It is mistaking the mechanism for the motor. There was no more wonderful dramatic voice in opera than Chaliapin's in *Boris Godunov*, but that was not what made him great. Indeed, I was less conscious of his voice than I was of the voices on the occasions just cited.

Wild Oats is a sprightly play, the kind regularly produced on the English stage of the 18th century. Its innocent good humor and witty writing served and still serve as a relief in a wicked world. That is why London has taken this happy-go-lucky piece to its bosom. But Alan Howard's much-admired bounce struck me not as joy but as athleticism.

Shall I confess it: it was not Ben Jonson's or Shakespeare's prowess (in *King Lear* which I also saw) that most gripped me in my week of London theatregoing, but a play called *Destiny* by David Edgar, a writer of whom I had never heard. His play may not be "art," nor is it exactly a "documentary." But it resembles those plays of "social significance" characteristic of the 1930s which are now disdained because of their presumed (often actual) crudity and simple-mindedness.

Destiny is direct rather than crude. It reveals the forces at work since 1947 when India was yielded independence and the British began to suffer the tensions of a declining economy, inflation, unemployment, social and political irresolution which spread anti-democratic and racist tendencies. (Their most prominent spokesman a few years ago was Enoch Powell.) This infection has taken shape in the rise of a new party—the National Front—which in the play is called "Nation Forward."

Though he finds the movement sinister, Edgar's play is no blunt denunciation of it, but a sober, often moving, study of its humanly understandable roots. It is certainly a warning in its implied analogy with the Germany of 1933. The Royal Shakespeare Company—many of the same players also appear in *King Lear*—acts *Destiny* with a straightforward and passionate naturalism which is altogether absorbing. Such a performance and such acting is closer to the purpose of the theatre (though surely not its main purpose) than museum exhibits of masterpieces.

* * *

On my return to New York I went to see that most perfect farce, the deliciously disguised fairy tale of English upper-class snobbishness, *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Circle in

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the Square). It is, on the whole, charmingly played by a nicely chosen cast knowingly directed by Stephen Porter. Also delectable are most of the five people in *Unsung Cole* (Circle Repertory Company) who celebrate the old New York sparkle of Cole Porter's lyrics and tunes. □

ART

LAWRENCE ALLOWAY

"Two Centuries of Black American Art" (Brooklyn Museum, until September 5) invites comparison with "Women Artists 1550-1950," due at Brooklyn in the fall. Both shows were arranged by guest curators for the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, which used to be better known for art gallery-derived spectaculars than for revisionist exhibitions. Somebody at the museum must have recognized the exceptional opportunity available as a result of the prejudices of the trustees and staffs of New York museums which rule out serious shows of either black or women's art. It is significant that the Brooklyn Museum is as near as either show will get to Manhattan.

David C. Driskell, curator of the show, was asked by the museum to prepare "a catalogue text capable of filling a void that has existed too long" in recent art history. The situation was similar to that facing the curators of the "Women Artists" show (*The Nation*, March 15): not much existed in the way of reliable research and modern interpretation. Driskell's catalogue, *Two Centuries of Black American Art* (Alfred Knopf, $5) is wide ranging but orderly and definitely indispensable to the study of black culture. He is well aware of the difficulty of writing accurately about black art. On one side demands for instant negritude, on the other discriminatory taste masquerades as aesthetic discrimination. He points out, for instance, that Barbara Rose and Sam Hunter, who have both written surveys of American art, share views inimical to the discussion of black art. Rose sees the crucial problem for artists between the wars as getting away from "provincialism" and "leftist politics"; Hunter nominates Stuart Davis as the model for transcending realism. Since black art of the period is inseparable from representation, local subjects and social themes, their work is disqualified from the start. Survey books by their nature lag behind current taste however and research like Driskell's (or Harris's and Nochlin's in *Women Artists*) will certainly make a difference to future surveys. In the same way our new appreciation of Social Realism and American-Scene Painting will infiltrate future surveys.

Driskell's text is in two parts, "The Formative Years, 1750-1920" and "The Evolution of a Black Aesthetic, 1920-1950." The first section deals with the plight and the adaptation of isolated individuals; the second with the coalescing of black self-consciousness in group and individual styles. Driskell neither simplifies the alienation of the first phase (see his excellent discussion of Henry O. Tanner) nor ignores the risks and contradictions of the second (he has a sharp eye for strands of white ideology in the black art of the 1920s, for instance).

I am not sure that the exhibition is as good as the catalogue: it is interesting but not exciting. Part of the reason for this is the fact that many of the artists in it followed placidly, or anxiously, the main lines of art in their periods. By definition, adaptation can be only to existing canons, but black artists are forced into minor roles compared to those available to the originating white artists. Thus Joshua Johnston is neither duller nor more interesting than other early American portrait painters, though he must have had a harder time of it. Robert S. Duncanson turns out to be an excellent romantic painter, but he is not central to general accounts of the Hudson River School to which he belonged. However the presence of black artists within prevailing styles is gaining recognition. I learned about Edward Mitchell Bannister from the exhibition "American Art in the Barbizon Mood" (National Collection of Fine Arts, Washington, 1975), a case in which a black artist was seen within the context of his chosen aesthetic cover. Driskell points out that earlier black painters had no choice but to work adaptively. To expect ethnicity in the 19th century is inappropriate; it is in the past fifty years that emblems of Harlem, the South and Africa have proliferated. Examples in the current show are Palmer Hayden's streets, Horace Pippin's farms and Lois Mailou Jones's tribal patterning in "Ubi Girl from Tai Region."

The representation of the 20th century is oddly muted. The firm scholarly achievement of Driskell's catalogue seems not to be matched by his taste, which is oblique and cautious. Romare Beardon is shown by works in several styles from different dates, with no more emphasis on his major work, the later collages, than on anything else: the result is diffuse rather than varied. The importance of Jacob Lawrence is hard to gauge from what is shown here, some small temperas on paper; on the other hand, too much is made of William H. Johnson. It may have been Driskell's intention to cut down on the mode of jazzy patterning, but it is a representative feature of black artists earlier in the 20th century (it combined—or seemed to—flatness and African ornamentation). By reducing the major artists in this style and emphasizing a lesser, Driskell has blunted the case for the vigor of black art in general.

In large mixed shows it is imperative to characterize individuals strongly; otherwise everything blurs. The way to do it is shown in the case of Aaron Douglas: his Art Deco allegories, with forms somewhere between Egyptian reliefs and a 1920s shadow play, constitute a unified and legible group. I also doubt Driskell's choice of Pippin's works: he is represented by six paintings, all of them late, when his flat planes were harder but not subtler than they had been. It may have been difficult to secure loans; it always is, but the moral imperative to lend to a pioneering show on this theme should have been pretty strong and it may be that Driskell is better at research and writing than in handling the works themselves. □

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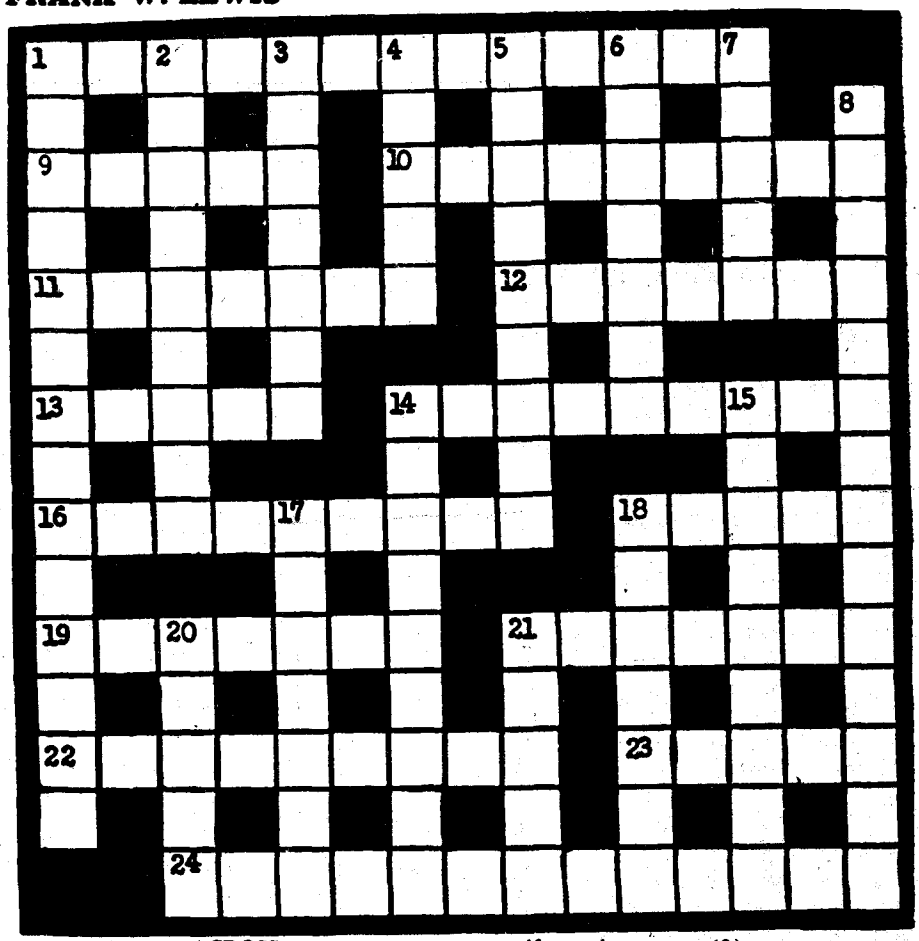

ACROSS

1 Shingle used by some foreigners? (6,7)
9 You might get title by such acts. (5)
10 One way to press an animal? Train early. . . . (4,5)
11 . . . although these might have first seen it with some misgivings. (7)
12 You won't go far with a suit if you do, although it's somewhat shortened. (3-4)
13 Hunt—or at least pursue. (5)
14 It means taking in something which would give dyspepsia if I'd returned in it. (9)
16 They might put some workers on it, to produce a variety of teal. (4,5)
18 It might be where you sit, but it's always in occupation. (5)
19 It makes the boat get upset, with many women having one with them. (4,3)
21 Go ahead! (7)
22 Shifting into gear, I start out of it. (9)
23 Clubs, as an old form of punishment. (5)
24 Not a real shot with it, despite the seeming attempt to light up the camera technique. (5,2,3,3)

DOWN

1 Perhaps needles and pins with it, but the publisher probably doesn't like it, either. (3,11)
2 Your balance isn't what it should be, if you have one. (9)
3 What the song said you could never do to Britons? (7)
4 One of the things men and women have in common in "all the world's a stage." (5)
5 A few final words, upon retirement. (4,5)
6 Draws in when the line has broken. (7)
7 Is one likely to be taking on? (5)
8 You won't talk with anybody this way! (6-2-6)
14 Trademark. (9)
15 Where you might be in trouble with the stock, perhaps. (2,3,4)
17 Perhaps a native Israeli gets about in the Roman Severn. (7)
18 Wayward and fretful. (7)
20 Time was for Leigh Hunt. (5)
21 A thing to do when feathers are ruffled. (5)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1687

ACROSS: 1 Fit for a king; 9 Chastise; 10 Exhale; 11 Gnashed; 12 Stamina; 14 Repast; 15 Amethyst; 17 Pullover; 20 Pepsin; 22 Flowers; 24 Teacher; 26 Patron; 27 American; 28 Adolf Hitler. DOWN: 2 and 23 It's a small world; 3 Fairest; 4 Reel; 5 and 7 Keep the change; 6 Nahum; 8 Blonds; 13 Carry; 16 Hypocrite; 18 Unload; 19 Veronal; 20 Present; 21 Iceman; 25 Cash.

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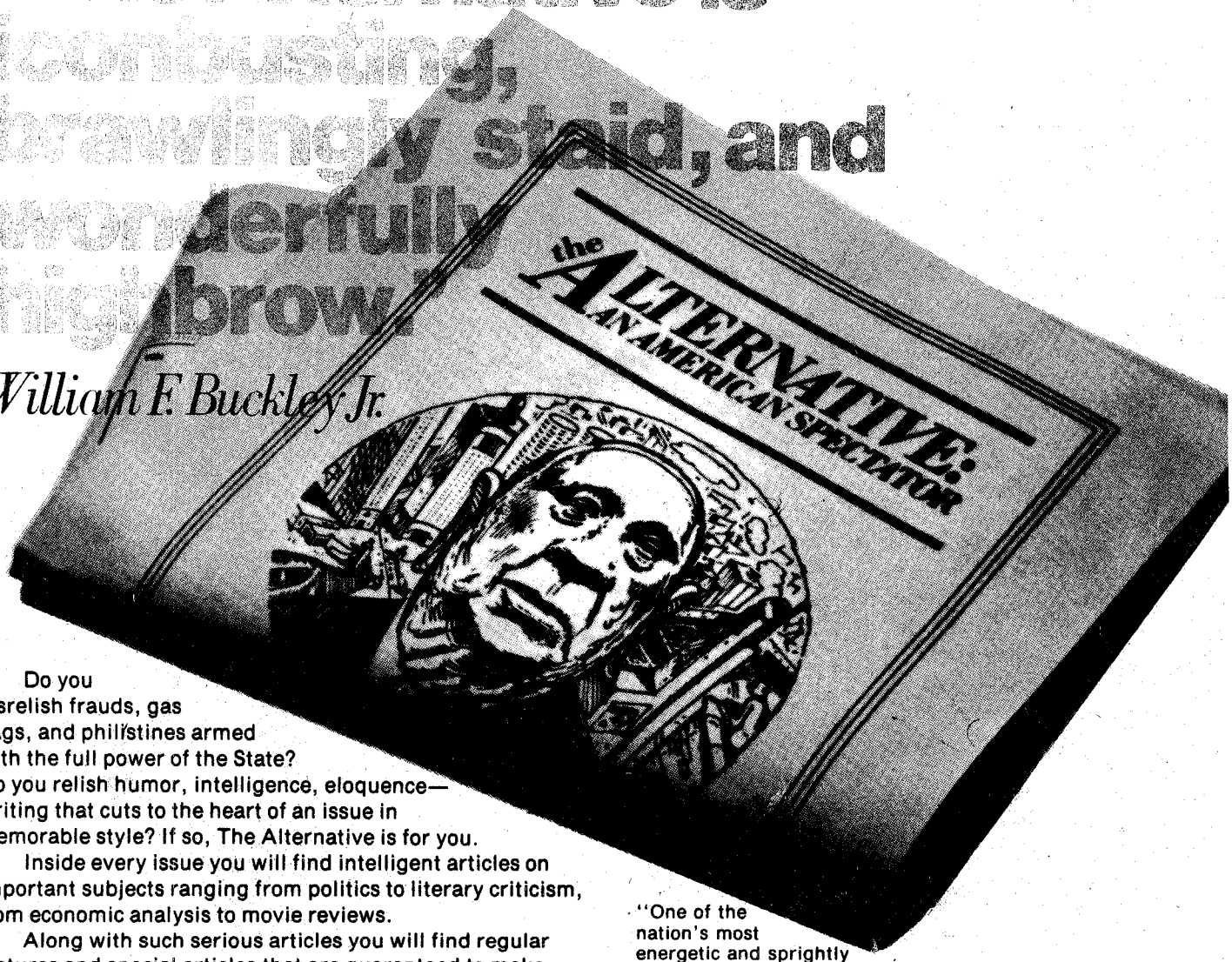

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